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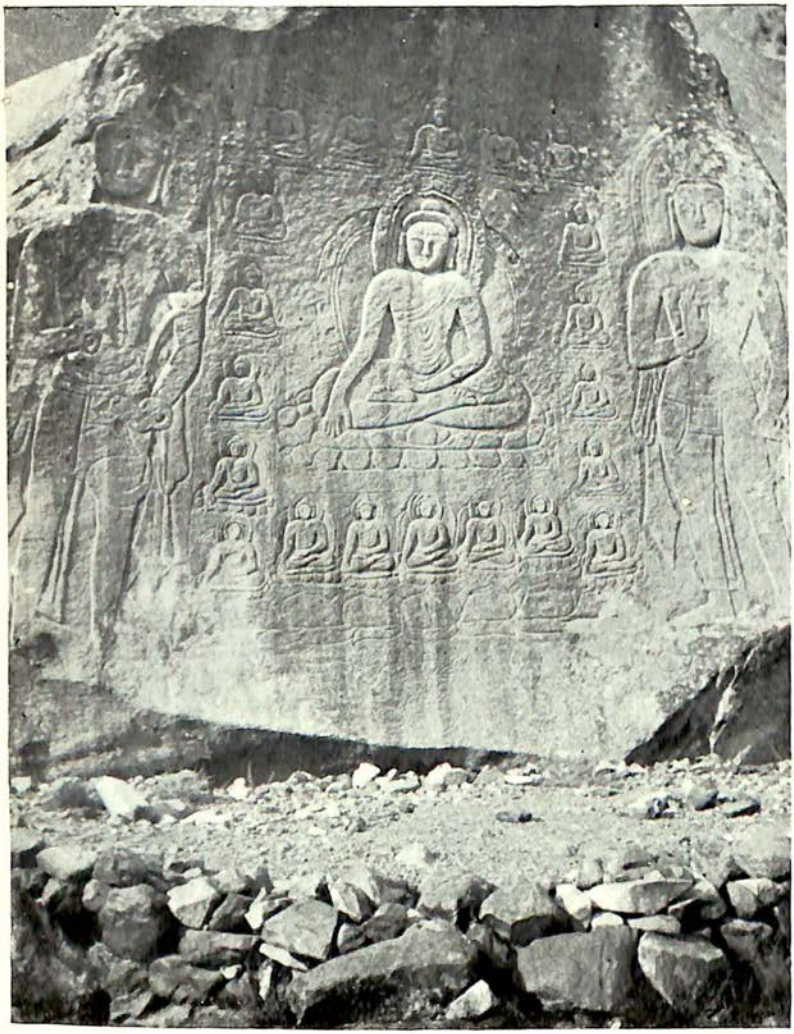
A SUMMER RIDE THROUGH WESTERN TIBET



Photographed by the Author. *Frontispiece.*

THE BUDDHA ROCK, SADPOR, BALTISTAN.

See page 297.

A SUMMER RIDE THROUGH WESTERN TIBET

B1799

BY
JANE E. DUNCAN

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WITH 93 ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

2x.9.6

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PREFACE

So much attention has been attracted recently to Tibet in its military and political aspects that it is hoped that an account of what may be called the domestic details of the western portion of the country, as set forth in the following pages, will be of interest to the general reader. The charm and ease of travelling in Western Tibet, of which I have tried to give an impression, may encourage those who have leisure and opportunity to set out and experience it for themselves.

To the Rev. A. H. Francke, an accomplished Tibetan scholar and a keen archaeologist, who is stationed at the Moravian Mission, Khalatse, Ladakh, I owe a debt of gratitude for having drawn my attention to the many ancient remains scattered over the country, and for having awakened my interest in them so much that I was fortunate enough to discover some which are of considerable historical value, and have been hitherto unrecorded. The archaeology of Ladakh and Baltistan is only beginning to be made known to European scholars, and there is undoubtedly a rich field for exploration in these countries. Repeatedly during the last twelve months, and up to the present week, I have had news of fresh discoveries of

ancient buildings and inscriptions made by the Moravian and Scandinavian missionaries there.

My warm thanks are also due to the Rev. Dr. Shawe and to the Rev. H. B. Marx, of the Moravian Mission Station at Leh, for much information and for interesting photographs to adorn my book; to Miss Christie also for the many beautiful photographs she has allowed me to make use of; to Sir R. C. Temple, Bart., C.I.E., for permission to reprint material and illustrations from an article on "Balu-mkhar," contributed by Mr. Francke and myself to the *Indian Antiquary* for September, 1905; and to Mr. Hayward Porter, for much valuable criticism of my manuscript and for careful reading of the proofs.

Lastly, I have great satisfaction in acknowledging the skill, energy, and resourcefulness of my servant, Aziz Khan, without which my journey would not have been practicable, and for the unfailing tact, courtesy, and attention shown to me by him and his colleagues Habibullah and Subhana, who combined to make the whole trip a pleasure and a success in every respect.

JANE E. DUNCAN.

March, 1906.

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CHAPTER I.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE JOURNEY.

EARLY in April, 1904, I went to Kashmir from India and took up my quarters in a house-boat on the Jhelum river at Srinagar, the capital of the State. It is not good to spend the whole summer at Srinagar, for though it stands 5000 feet above sea-level the heat is great, the climate is enervating, and the mosquitoes are intolerable at that season; I therefore resolved to go to the hills for the hot weather. Visions of finding my way to Leh in Western Tibet, and perhaps seeing the Devil Dance of masked Lamas at Himis Gompa (described in Mr. Knight's *Where Three Empires Meet*), floated through my mind, and at last, after some hesitation owing to the reported difficulties of the road, my plans took shape, thanks in great measure to the advice and encouragement of Dr. Neve at the Mission Hospital, Srinagar, who said there was nothing to hinder my going to Himis, and told me what precautions to take with regard to health. One of the luxuries of travelling alone is being free to change one's plans at any moment, and I was encouraged to make the attempt by the knowledge that if the travelling were too hard, or if the high altitudes of Ladakh proved too great a strain for heart and lungs, I need not go on. The feeling

of being able to turn back naturally did away with the wish for it—naturally so in the case of a woman at least.

Ladakh and the neighbouring country of Baltistan (sometimes called Balti or Skardo, the latter being the name of its capital), which form Western or Little Tibet, were conquered in 1833-4 by the Dogra Gulab Singh, Rajah of Jammu, a Hindu, who also annexed Gilgit and Astor. In 1845 he was secured in possession of the newly conquered territory by treaty with our Government, who sold him the State of Kashmir, being then ignorant of its value as a buffer State between British and Russian territory. The Rajah then assumed the title of Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1887 Kashmir was almost bankrupt owing to misappropriation of the revenues by the army of Hindu officials who robbed the Maharajah on one hand and the peasantry, who are almost all Mohammedans, on the other, and as the State would very soon have been quite unable to fulfil the obligations of her treaty with Great Britain, a settlement officer was appointed to fix assessments and regulate their collection. This work was finished in 1893 by Mr. (now Sir Walter) Lawrence, and the result has been highly satisfactory, as while the peasants flourish the revenue of the Maharajah increases. Many improvements have been made under the direction of our Government, such as the abolition of forced labour for the State, a system under which thousands of coolies suffered indescribable miseries, often ending in death; the preservation of the forests, which were fast disappearing; and the protection of game, which was so indiscriminately slaughtered that in some places it had become almost extinct. The population of the Maharajah's dominions, which extend to 68,000 square

miles, increased from 1½ millions in 1873 to 2½ millions in 1902.

There are British Residents or Commissioners stationed at Srinagar, Leh, and Gilgit, and there is a political officer at Hunza, which, with its neighbour Nagar, has since 1892 settled down peacefully under our rule, after a long career of fighting, robbery, and murder. Our borders now reach to the Pamirs, where they march with Russian territory.

The territory of Kashmir is bounded on its eastern frontier by Great Tibet, the land forbidden till this year 1904 to Europeans. The distance from Srinagar (let me remark here that this name is pronounced Sri-nugger), to Leh, the capital of Ladakh, is 250 miles, while Lhasa is nearly 1000 miles south-east of Leh. These 250 miles are divided into 19 marches, which must be walked or ridden; they vary in length from 7½ to 23 miles, but in fine weather the short marches can be doubled, and the journey done easily in 15 or 16 days. The walking powers of the servants and pack coolies determine the rate of progress, which is of course slow over difficult ground or high passes, but a rider who had a change of ponies waiting for him every five miles once did the journey in 48 hours, hurrying on night and day and galloping wherever the path was safe enough to allow it.

The great annual festival or Devil Dance at Himis, 20 miles beyond Leh, was held that year on the 22nd and 23rd of June, and in order to be in good time for it I arranged to start about the end of May or as soon as the road, and particularly the Zoji La, the great pass separating Kashmir from Ladakh, was declared to be in fair condition. What I should do or where I should go after seeing Himis was left to chance to determine when

I got there, with the proviso that if possible the return to Kashmir should be by a different route, and thus my journey to Pangkong Lake on the border of Great Tibet, and through Baltistan and a part of the Dard country by degrees evolved itself, though I had no idea of going to these places when I started.

Everyone in Srinagar had heard of my intended trip seemingly, and most of the *badmashes* (thieves, rascals, scoundrels) in the place came to my boat to offer themselves as servants, no doubt thinking it would be a fine thing to get a lone woman up into the hills and rob and perhaps leave her there. Bazaar boatmen came sailing alongside pressing their wares—helmets, chaplies, warm gloves and socks, goggles, khud-sticks, and rifles, and I could not take a walk without some man approaching with insinuating smile and saying, "Huzoor (sahib) going to Ladakh? I bearer!" A week before I started I had almost despaired of finding a suitable servant, when Mr. Cockburn at the Tourists' Agency asked me to have an interview at his office with a really good man whom he had known for years, but when I went I was greatly disappointed to hear that he could not speak English and as I did not know more than a few words of Hindustani the difficulty seemed insuperable. However, we discovered while we were talking that he understood what was being said, and as I liked the look of him I engaged him, telling him that he must rub up his English, which he used to speak quite well, and I would work away at the vernacular, but in two days after he came to me, he had found his English and was talking quite fluently. It was one of the greatest pieces of good fortune I have ever had to find Aziz Khan (that is his name), for without him or his like I could never have undertaken

the trip. He made all the *bandobast* (a comprehensive Indian word meaning every kind of arrangement), engaged coolies and ponies, superintended pitching the tents, packed and unpacked, bought provisions that we did not carry with us, and did all the cooking. He made excellent bread, cakes that Buszard would have been proud of, scones, butter and jam, mended my saddle and wanted to mend my stockings, did the washing, and kept all the other servants and the coolies in good order; for he is a high-class Peshawur Pathan (pronounced Paythan by Tommy Atkins, but properly Pattán, with a strong accent on the second syllable), and the natives stand in awe of such a man and obey him, which is not always the case when a Hindu gives an order; while as for a Kashmiri the Tibetans hold him in derision and will not do a thing he tells them. Aziz Khan engaged three other servants—none of them knowing English—one a bearer who acted as table servant, and two dandymen, one of whom did bheestie work, that is, looked after the water supply for the camp.

Habibullah, the bearer, was a very tall, handsome Kashmiri with a gentle melancholy expression of face, and a comical habit of breaking out at odd moments into histories of his ancestry, which was by turns Afghan, Pathan, or Rajput, much the same as if a man claimed to be English, Irish, and French. He went so far as to tell me that his mother was Aziz Khan's sister, a woman he had never set eyes on! He looked upon Aziz Khan as a person of great importance, and wished to add to his own value in my estimation by pretending to be related to him. He was a kindly, well-meaning, rather lazy man, but decidedly stupid, and when he was more than usually dense his thick ankles and widely

turned-out splay feet seemed to be an additional exasperation.

Subhana, dandyman and bheestie, was a Pahari or hillman, an active, well-built, rather little man of 25, a good walker and always on the alert. He often walked beside my pony in rough places and on the edge of precipices, to be ready in case of accidents; he had a great gift of speech, and sometimes poured out a flood of talk in which "Miss Sahib" came in at every third word, and as that was all I understood I was not much the wiser.

I must explain that a dandy is a chair borne on poles, on men's shoulders; I was advised to take it in case of being ill or too tired to ride, and to have two men of my own, hiring two others when I used it, which, however, I only did for one day.

Ramzana, the other dandyman, was a dirty, lazy, cowardly, disobedient Kashmiri, a typical specimen of his race, and I would not let him come near me. In August I noticed that his cotton clothes, which he had begun to wear when the weather became hot, looked excessively dirty, and I sent an order that he was to put on clean ones; but he had not any others, and had come away on a four-months' journey with one shirt and one pair of pyjamas. The next order was that he was to go to bed while one of the other men washed his clothes; but Aziz Khan bought stuff for a suit, found a tailor to make it, and kept the price off Ramzana's pay. Before leaving Srinagar I gave each of the five servants a suit of warm clothes (costing 6 rupees or 8s.) for Ladakh, also socks, gloves, chaplies, and goggles to be worn on the snow; but Ramzana wore his warm things in the hot weather, and they were in holes when we got to the cold passes where there was no chance of replacing them.

Aziz Khan, a strict Mussulman, neither drank nor smoked, and the other men, who were also Mohammedans, followed his example.

The Governor of Kashmir very kindly allowed me to hire a pony and syce from the Government Transport stables, though it is against rule to take them up country. The pony, Makhti by name, was capital—quick, quiet, and having so smooth a walk that it was like sitting on a chair to be on her back, a matter of great consequence, as the whole journey was done at a walking pace. The syce turned out to be far from satisfactory, taking no interest in poor Makhti, and neglecting her shamefully; he was in fact not a syce at all, only a transport driver who knew nothing of his duties, and the pony suffered accordingly. I was also offered a State chuprassi, or courier, to take charge of the expedition, but was advised by experienced friends not to have him, as small officials of his class rob people terribly and are the cause of endless trouble. The villagers sometimes take to the hills when they hear of the approach of a party in charge of a State chuprassi, with the consequence that no supplies can be had.

Travel within Kashmir territory is thoroughly organized, and at each village it is the duty of the lumbardar, or headman, who is paid by the State, to supply at fixed rates any food and wood available, and also transport in the shape of coolies or ponies, and to show an official list of prices if required. The rate for a pony, riding or pack, is 8 annas (8d.) per march of about 16 miles, and 4 annas for a coolie; if the march is longer or the road or weather very bad the charges may be higher or a backshish expected. Prices of food and wood vary according to the locality, and forage is twice as dear in the Sind Valley as in Ladakh.

There is a dak bungalow or rest-house in or near the village at each stage of the road to Leh, but those in the Sind Valley, up which it leads for the first 50 miles, belong to the State of Kashmir and are mere hovels, only fit for cattle, some of them not even having window-places: glass is quite out of the question. Beyond the Zoji La, where they are under the control of the British Resident at Leh, they are clean and comfortable, and are provided with a few articles of furniture in each bed-sitting room. It is necessary, however, to take tents in case of halting where there is no dak bungalow, or where, if there is one, it is too dirty for habitation, and I preferred camping so much that I rarely used anything but my tent. For myself I had an 80 lb. Cabul tent, which is a load for a coolie or half a load for a pony. It measured 11 feet by 9, was my only home for nearly six months, and was quitted with regret. It had a double fly, the outer fly projecting in the rear to form a bathroom; on the floor was a soldier's waterproof sheet (I had half a dozen of these, which proved very useful), covered with a crimson embroidered numdah or felt rug, and this with the crimson rizai, a thing like a thin eiderdown quilt, on the bed, gave a look of comfort to the interior. Another numdah was laid on the bedstead under the mattress to prevent draughts from underneath, which is as necessary as having plenty of clothes on the top in cold weather, the ground being the warmest place to sleep on when the cold is very severe. A substantial table, a low canvas chair with leather arms, and a higher chair for use at meals formed the furniture, and it could all be folded up flat. The high chair was of a kind given to collapsing, and visitors who were aware of this peculiarity sat on it with precaution or preferred mother earth to begin with. I never sat in the tent except on the

extremely rare occasions when the weather was very cold or very wet.

The servants had two 6 foot tents, one for sleeping in and the other for the kitchen; they were pitched a few yards away from mine out of earshot of talking, but one of the men always slept on the ground under my outer fly so as to be within reach if I wanted anything. The cooking utensils consisted of aluminium and iron degches or cooking pots and a kettle; the tea and dinner dishes were of enamelled ware. The stores were not extensive, merely tea, sugar, tapioca, and other pudding stuffs, flour, tinned butter, maggi for making soup, and quantities of jam, a very wholesome article of food when, as happened frequently on this journey, vegetables were not to be had. In addition to Delhi flour, which is like our home flour, I had Paisley self-raising flour, an almost indispensable article on the march, as it makes very good bread when used in the proportion of one spoonful to six of the other. The lamps were all candle-lamps, as kerosene is very apt to flavour any food carried in its neighbourhood. There was no tinned meat or fish of any description among the stores, and I have been told since that I probably owed my unbroken health to this circumstance; my being practically a teetotaller was certainly also in my favour. At each camping-place where mutton, fowls, eggs, milk, and wood were to be had, these were bought, and when we were going to places where they did not exist, a sufficient quantity for several days' march was procured.

My stock of medicines was very small, much too small for the large number of people who came to me for treatment at some of the villages I passed through. A bottle of whisky and one of brandy were taken in case of illness; but the brandy bottle was broken when it was still almost

full, and there were the remains of the whisky in my flask more than a year afterwards, though I had shared its contents among passing travellers.

A very important article was a canvas water-bag of an Indian pattern, with a spout, and a strap for carrying it over the shoulder; it was carried on the march by my pony-man and contained a supply of boiled drinking water, which by evaporation became cooler as the air became hotter. In Ladakh and Baltistan the water of the rivers is not good, being full of the sand which they stir up in their furious course, and the clear side-streams coming down from the snows are few and far between, perhaps only one being met with in a long day.

The servants took about 150 lbs. of rice for their own use, which they provided out of their rassad or food allowance. Rice is the principal food of Indians and Kashmiris, and is not to be had between the Sind Valley and Leh. They do not like the Tibetan country flour, which they say makes them ill, but if it does it is probably because they do not cook it sufficiently. I had to explain to them the necessity of cooking everything nearly half as long again on the high ground in Ladakh and Baltistan as in Kashmir, owing to the boiling-point being lower.

As I am dealing with the food question, let me extol the skill of the Indian cook, who will prepare quite an elaborate dinner on a kitchen-range consisting of three stones set up on end in the shelter of a rock or tree to form three sides of a square which holds a few handfuls of wood, and on this the cooking pot is placed and a succession of dishes is served, each in some mysterious way kept hot till it is wanted. If I started at four o'clock in the morning Aziz Khan always had a hot breakfast ready for

me; luncheon consisted of cold meat and milk pudding, with soup or coffee, which he warmed up on the wayside; afternoon tea was followed by a hot bath when the morning start was too early for it, and the dinner at 7.30 was a repetition of the mid-day meal, with the addition of vegetables, all freshly cooked. I usually got to the camping-ground by three or four o'clock after resting for a couple of hours in the heat of the day, and the ponies and coolies arrived an hour or two later.

One of the joys of the expedition was getting away from dress with its worries as distinguished from mere clothes, and many a time after returning to civilization I longed to be in the desert again, where the crows and the goats did not care what I wore. I took three woollen coats and skirts, one thick and two thin, some flannel blouses, warm and cool woollen underclothing, a long coat, a golf cape and a large fur cloak, a helmet, and a soft cap for wearing in the tent or in the evening. When the weather was hot the fur cloak was anathematized, and when it was cold it saved my life.

For foot-gear I had the Kashmir chaplies, sandals with lining soles of felt, which are worn over socks of sambur leather (similar to chamois leather), made like lacing boots; these socks are drawn over the stockings, and the whole arrangement is so comfortable that it is like treading on velvet, and prevents the feet being jarred on rough stony tracks. For use on grass the soles are studded with nails, but chaplies are not suitable for wet ground. For riding or wearing in the tent in cold weather I had a pair of Gilgit boots, which are the same shape as guardsmen's boots, the stiff quilted cloth tops coming well above the knee, the soles and goloshed part being of thick untanned leather; they are made very roomy so as to avoid pressure

on the feet which would interfere with the circulation of the blood.

The stores, etc., were packed in kiltas (leather-covered paniers) and my personal luggage was a small cabin trunk, a large canvas bag, and a hold-all, but the trunk was sent back from Leh with its contents as a mere superfluity. The zinc bath fitted into a basket to protect it in bumping against rocks, and had another basket inside which held bed and table linen, and could be lifted out without the trouble of unpacking the bath every day. I took two table-cloths and four table-napkins, besides some Japanese paper doylies—and was looked upon in consequence by other travellers as a hopeless sybarite.

My books were the Bible, Shakespeare, four volumes of the *World's Classics*, viz. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Bacon's Essays*, *Esmond*, and *English Ballads*, and also *Sartor Resartus*, which I have tried many times to read through, and have failed once more ignominously. I am not scientific, and had not even a thermometer; I deeply regretted my ignorance of botany and geology, for even a smattering of these would have added immensely to the interest of the expedition.

We had no fire-arms in the camp, which I was rather glad of when I was told long afterwards that once in the jungle when the brilliant-witted Habibullah was given his sahib's gun to clean, he began the operation by accidentally shooting through the head a coolie who happened to be sitting near him.

Paper money is of no use for paying coolies and villagers, so I took 600 rupees (about £40) in silver, and this sum, in addition to cheques for 300 more which shopkeepers in the bazaars at Leh and Skardo cashed for me, covered all expenses (including curiosities), till I got back to Kashmir

at the end of September. It is usual to give the money to the head servant to take care of, and he doles it out to the sahib as it is wanted. Transport is the costliest item, amounting in my case to about four rupees (5/4) a day, but when I stayed for a month in one place I did not spend more than five pounds altogether. The servants only accepted a few rupees of their wages, as they reckon to live while travelling on their food allowance—two rupees a month, except in the case of Aziz Khan, who had five rupees.

CHAPTER II.

SIND VALLEY AND ZOJÎ LA.

HAVING completed my arrangements I left Srinagar on the 27th of May in my house-boat, and sailed in two days to Gunderbal, at the entrance to the Sind Valley, instead of going there by land, which would have only taken a few hours; but it was delightful to sit in the sunshine on the roof of the boat as it drifted with the current down the Jhelum river, the Hydaspes of the ancients, which glides under its seven bridges through the city, a picturesque, tumble-down Venice built of wood. The brown, weather-beaten houses, with their gracefully designed windows and balconies, are of all sizes, heights, and shapes, and slope at various angles, some stooping forward as if to look at their own image in the water, others leaning languidly against their neighbours for support. Here and there a grassy-roofed ziarat or mosque stands apart in its own little patch of ground, with the broad flight of steps of its ghaut reaching down to the river, or a Hindu temple, with its high conical dome glitters in the sunlight, which makes it look gay whether it is gilded or whether its metal covering is merely made from paraffin tins; trees grow wherever they can find a corner for their roots to cling to among the crowd of buildings. The stream bears along huge, clumsy,

square-ended cargo-boats with high sides made of heavy planks fastened together with strong metal clamps; doongas or native house-boats with the family occupations going on in full view; and arrowy shikaras, like gondolas, darting along to the stroke of their three or four rowers, whose paddle-blades are made in the shape of a heart. Glimpses are caught of the Himalayas, standing a sentinel guard round the beautiful Vale of Kashmir, which is approximately 84 miles long and from 20 to 25 miles wide, and lies a fertile basin in the midst of interminable snow-capped mountains, with the Jhelum winding through it in mazy links like the Forth in the Carse of Stirling. The boat was towed or poled through the shining shallow Anchar, half lake, half swamp, with its water gardens and fish traps, and up the Sind River, which falls into the Jhelum at Shadipur, where we tied up for a night. Slowly we approached the great mountain barrier which I was to penetrate, and on a lovely afternoon tied up for the last time at Gunderbal. Here I dismissed the pretty "Water Witch" and her crew, who clamoured at the last moment for backshish and chits (letters or references for character), and here my pony Makhti and her syce met me, and on the 29th of May I started on her for my first march, the syce walking in front, Aziz Khan riding behind, and Habibullah bringing up the rear with nine coolies, three pack ponies, and the dandy with four bearers, all for one small woman! But when stores for four months and tents have to be carried every step of the way, it is not a simple matter, oh ye who are within a cab drive of a railway station, and never go more than a mile or two away from shops! It proved unnecessary to have so much transport, and in a few days it was reduced to seven ponies or fourteen coolies, and no extra dandymen,

as I preferred riding to being carried, however tired I might feel, when I discovered that the Tibetans have no idea how to carry a dandy, and are very apt, when shifting the poles from one shoulder to the other, to let it drop—not a pleasant thing to happen on the edge of the precipices, along which the roads in Tibet are very often cut.

And now began a perpetual, leisurely picnic, lasting for months, with none of the interruptions which make modern life a series of hurries, and no reluctant obedience to the call homewards for the prosaic needs of eating or sleeping, because food and shelter were carried with us. After an early breakfast under the trees, there was the long ride in clear air and sunshine through scenery, beautiful, grand, sombre or weird, but always supremely interesting in its changing aspects; the halt by the roadside at mid-day in some shady spot, often near a village whose quaint inhabitants come peering at the stranger; and, at the end of the day's march, tea, a bath, a book, followed by a simple dinner, sometimes in the radiance of moon- or star-light, and then a night of refreshing sleep in the airy tent—all this in a quiet, a silence, a freedom from the strife of tongues which was balm to brain and nerves, and whose healing influence lasted for years afterwards.

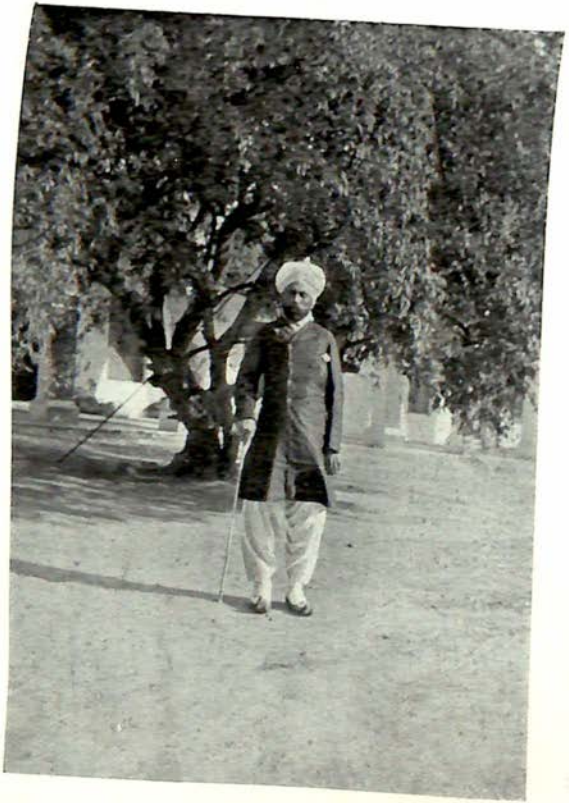
The road for the first two marches up the Sind Valley to Gagangair, 30 miles from Gunderbal, wound through meadows and paddy fields, where the farmers were busy ploughing and irrigating; past barley crops in full ear, and patches of lilac iris and field orchids, or under the shade of magnificent chenars (plane-trees), and mulberry trees covered with the ripe, delicious fruit which the black bears are so fond of. Clumps of wild roses, red, pink, yellow, and white, ran up the trees and

hung down in great wreaths and sprays, just as they do in the Surrey lanes in June, while the rushing waters of the Sind River made a constant accompaniment to all this beauty. The hills, grassy or pine-clad, closed in as we advanced, and snowy ranges behind them, bathed in sunshine, towered up into peaks of 13,000 or 14,000 feet. On the third day's march the scenery changed completely from its former sylvan character. Soon after leaving Gagangair we came upon a fakir or holy man, dark, shaggy, and morose-looking, with bare chest and a sheet thrown round his shoulders, seated on the ground beside a hollow tree, which he made his home. His appearance was a fitting index to the landscape we now began to pass through. The glen narrowed and became very wild, the path winding steeply up and down among boulders and over avalanches, across great falls of rock, which in their descent had carried down trees, whose roots, trunks, and branches writhed and twisted on the ground with no semblance of their original shape, and yet continued to send forth green shoots in their seeming agony. The grey-green river roared and boiled far below, black clouds gathered overhead, and a thunderstorm growled behind in the distance. The whole scene was indescribably grand, some parts of it, where the mountains were too steep for snow or vegetation to cling to them, reminding me of the Canadian Rockies, others resembling the more beautiful Selkirk range. At last, after a steep, rough climb, we got on to the grassy meadow at Sonamarg, where an Australian fellow-traveller was encamped who was on his way to Leh on a shooting expedition; we had arranged to meet here and pitch our tents together for the rest of the journey, so that he might keep an eye on my servants and coolies. I waited here for three days,

enjoying the magnificent scenery, while he was stalking a red bear, and at last he got him, a fine specimen, measuring five feet ten inches over all by my tape measure. He was shot through the head, on a glacier high on the mountain side, and skinned on the spot, and then a wonderful thing happened. In less than a minute, in what had been an apparently empty sky a vulture appeared, in five minutes ten more came, and three-quarters of an hour after that bear had been walking about in the snow nothing was left of him but his skeleton.

Sonamarg is a favourite spot for camping, and was at one time the principal hill station in Kashmir, but was abandoned some years ago in favour of Gulmarg, owing partly to the long distance from Srinagar and partly to its great height, 8000 feet, which affected the health of many people and prevented them from sleeping. A little later in the season it would be carpeted with flowers, but now it had only just emerged from its covering of snow.

On the second morning, as we were sitting in front of our tents after breakfast, a lady came in sight whom the sportsman had seen at Gunderbal on his way up; she sat down, had some cocoa, and told us her exploits. She had been up the Zoji La by herself with a shikari and two or three other servants, and had shot a black bear, a red bear (worth twenty black bears because so much more difficult to get), and two ibex, and she was then walking to a place fourteen miles down the valley where she had been told there was a leopard; but she made up her mind to take a day off and pitch her tent beside ours and not to go further till next morning, as it was a pleasure to have someone to talk to after being out in the wilds with no one but natives for a week.



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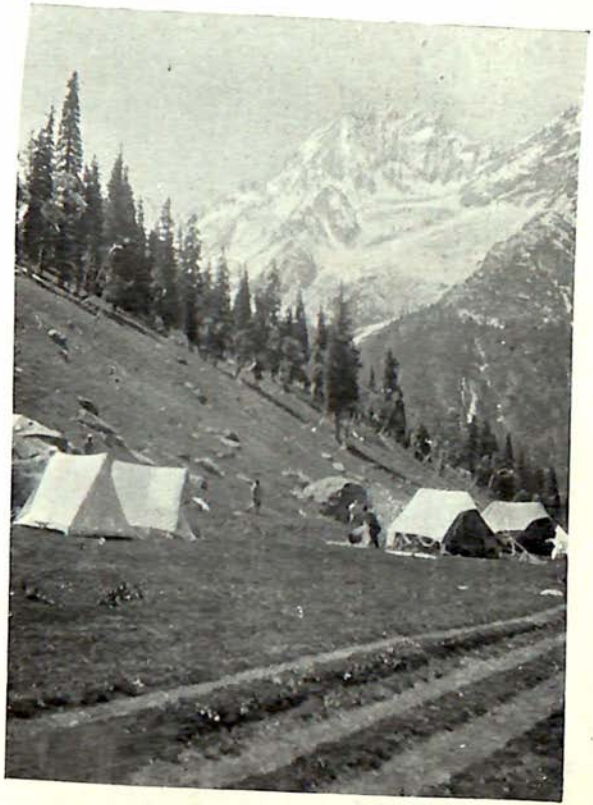


Photographed by the Author.

THE CAMP AT SONAMARG.

The next morning I walked three miles down the valley with this enterprising sportswoman, who was going to sit up in a tree that night to watch for the leopard; she would be securely tied to her perch in case of falling asleep, and she was such an excellent shot that there was little fear of any harm coming to the dog to be used as a bait on the ground below.

On the morning of the 4th of June we struck our tents, and set out on the march to Baltal, nine miles off, at the foot of the dreaded Zoji La. Though we started at 10.45 we did not get to our destination till 2.15, which seemed very slow; but transport ponies never do more than 2½ miles an hour, and it is no use hurrying and getting to the camping-ground long before servants and tents arrive.

After leaving Sonamarg, with its farms and cottages and flocks of sheep and goats, its grassy meadows, cultivated lands, and knolls covered with trees, a bare lonely valley is entered, whose steep hillsides are covered with screes of stones from which great numbers of boulders have rolled down, loosened by wind and frost, and now lie scattered by the path. An occasional troop of pack-ponies laden with bales of wool or skins from Ladakh was met with, driven by wild-looking but good-humoured Tibetans, many of whom turned prayer-wheels or twisted spindles as they walked, drawing the thread from a bracelet of black wool which encircled the left wrist. At Baltal an officer of Artillery, whom we had seen in the morning as he passed through Sonamarg, and who was also on his way to Leh, camped near us, and we all dined together in front of my tent on my table, as it was the largest and least likely to collapse of any in the camp. I was considered to be living in the lap of luxury because I had a table-cloth, and could

provide the party with paper doylies. Each of us had our own cook and table-boy, and separate food, plates, knives and forks, and were careful not to encroach on each other's stores in any way, as they were calculated to last just for the trip, and could only be replenished by sending all the way back to Srinagar by coolie. We dined together in this way every evening for a week (when the two gentlemen pushed on by double marches to Leh), though we started independently in the morning, and often saw nothing of each other all day.

Immediately after dinner, on the 4th of June, we separated to prepare for the early start next day, and at 4 a.m. on the 5th I set out in my dandy, carried by four men and accompanied by Aziz Khan, who helped to balance the dandy in difficult places, and sometimes took me on his back when the roughness of the path obliged me to get out of it. The moon in her third quarter was shining brightly, and larks were singing, though the sun did not begin to flush the snow on the topmost peaks till nearly an hour later. The path wound by short, steep zigzags for 2000 feet up the face of the mountain, which blocks the upper end of the Sind Valley, and far below was the nullah (gorge) full of snow, now too soft to be walked on, though a week earlier, while it was still hard, that was the only possible route to take.

The tents of the two sahibs were still standing down in the valley at nearly six o'clock, and it looked as if they would be very late, but they were only an hour after me in getting in to Mitsahoi, the first stopping place. We ascended steadily for two hours, the dandy-men occasionally putting me down while they rested for a minute or two, but they did not seem to feel the

climb much, talking to each other as they went—one toothless old body, who did not look at all fit for the work, breaking out into a chant at intervals while the others joined in chorus; Europeans have to stop often to gasp, as the quick rise from 9000 to 11,300 feet is trying to the heart. At six o'clock we got to the top, and then descended for a quarter of an hour down a very steep path to the snow where the track up the nullah joined ours, and here we entered a fairly wide valley entirely covered with snow, which we travelled through in about four hours, but in bad weather it may take double that time. The first part of the way was quite hard, as the sun's rays did not reach it over the mountain tops till half-past eight, but after that the going became rather bad, and I had to get out and walk with the help of a khud-stick (the local alpenstock) and Aziz Khan's arm, slipping, staggering, getting into holes and falling often. Some people who came through this wintry valley a month later described it as a garden thickly set with exquisite flowers.

The pack-ponies were taken one at a time over the worst places, one man holding the head and another the tail to steady them, and it is really wonderful how these little, heavy-laden creatures keep their footing. For some distance the track was across the lower end of a steep avalanche on the very edge of the swift river which had cut its way through it, and if the ponies had fallen in, as happened to one a few days later, they and their loads would have been washed away and never seen again.

Just before arriving at the dak bungalow at Mitsahoi, we crossed a stream coming down from a side nullah, bridged by a single poplar pole on which the passenger sits astride and works himself along with legs and arms,

a method that did not approve itself to me, so, as it was dangerous to ride, I was carried through the water on a man's back. A few hours later this torrent would be so swollen by melted snow as to be impassable, and would be again shrunken the following morning after the night's frost. For this reason it is better to start very early on a day's march in the spring or beginning of the summer, when the heat of the sun is becoming powerful, as otherwise there may be many hours' detention till a stream subsides.

We were within a few yards of the bungalow when my foot slipped, and down I came in a muddy pool and was wet to the skin; but I was in a kind of dream by this time in which nothing seemed of any consequence. A fire was lighted immediately in the bungalow, and I dried some of my clothes and changed others, and then had a substantial meal, which I was just finishing when the two sahibs arrived. They only stayed for half an hour to have something to eat, but I lay down for three hours, slept, and had tea at two, and started twenty minutes afterwards on the pony, feeling quite fresh and thinking all my troubles were over. This was far from being the case, however, for there was a great deal more snow to cross, and the track was so much worse that the pack-ponies fell, one turning a complete somersault, and I had to be helped along as before. Though the march was laborious, it was also amusing, but it was a relief when we came at last to a flat, grassy meadow and could get along easily to Matayan, the camping-place, which we reached at 5.20, having taken three hours to do five miles. The tents were soon pitched near those of my two companions, who had already arrived, and after a wash we all three sat down to dinner, feeling quite fit for the next day's march to Dras, twelve miles distant.

It gave a feeling of strangeness in coming over the desolate, snow-covered Zoji La to hear the cuckoo's note there. From its peculiarity of sounding "at once far off and near," it is not easy to judge where the bird is, but it seemed very high up on the side of the mountains, which rise 14,000 or 15,000 feet above the sea on each side of the pass. The hoopoe we left behind at Gagangair, and we did not hear the cuckoo after Dras; but the lark sang merrily wherever there were patches of cultivated ground, which became less and less frequent as we advanced into stony Tibet. It would be interesting to know in what kind of nest the cuckoo places its egg here, and what its life-history is at this elevation.[1]

[1] Two curious facts in connection with the cuckoo were related to me by friends from their own observation. In one case a lady was walking on a Scottish moor, when she saw what she took at first to be a fight between a pair of hedge-sparrows and two small hawks, but on coming nearer, discovered that the assailants were cuckoos. The hedge-sparrows were in great distress, uttering loud cries and striking at their foes, then retiring to defend their nest, till at last the male cuckoo flew away, drawing them off and leaving the coast clear for the hen, who darted in behind them to the nest, and in it dropped her egg, which she had been carrying in her bill. It has sometimes been asked how the cuckoo can deposit an egg in a nest built in a crevice too small to admit her body, but this explains it.

The other incident happened in Norfolk, where a cuckoo's egg had been put in a hedge-sparrow's nest in a bush growing against the wall of a house under my friend's bedroom window. When the young intruder had been hatched out, and had grown so big that its wings hung over the sides of the nest, having shouldered out the poor little fledglings which lay dead on the ground below, the father cuckoo came about four o'clock one morning, took up his position on a low wall opposite, and began to teach his offspring to say "cuckoo"; the lessons were continued at the same hour daily till the note was mastered, and my friend said that, though she was annoyed at being waked so early, she could not help laughing at the ludicrous croaks uttered by the young bird in its attempts to imitate its parent. Its cry is so delightful a sound as the herald of summer that it is quite a relief to have proof that the cuckoo is after all not in all respects the heartless wretch it is generally believed to be.

CHAPTER III.

STONY TIBET AND ITS BUDDHISTS.

THE march from Matayan to the village of Dras was only twelve miles and was done in four hours, allowing us to get in at one o'clock. There was a gradual descent through a grassy valley about a quarter of a mile in width at first, and widening out to two miles further on. After this day we saw almost no natural vegetation, everything in this country having to be grown by irrigation owing to the extreme dryness of the climate, as all moisture is intercepted by the mountain ranges, rising in some places to 16,000 or 17,000 feet, which we had just crossed, and in which the Zoji La, 11,300 feet, is the lowest depression for several hundred miles. The precipitous rise of 2000 feet from the Kashmir side is succeeded on the eastern side by a fall of 1000 feet in twenty miles—so slight a fall that it is only perceptible to the eye by the flow of the streams. Soon we passed the village of Pandras on a meadow by the side of the Dras river, which rushed along on its way to the Indus; the flat-roofed houses, totally different from those of Kashmir, looked castle-like with their thick stone walls pierced at long intervals by very small windows. On the hillsides across the river we saw the cave-like openings of gold-workings in which gold is found, but in such small

quantities that it is not sufficient to repay labour except when there is no field or transport work to be done, these being the summer industries of Western Tibet. I was told that in the autumn before the snow comes and when the streams are dried up, geese are driven up the empty channels with their feet smeared with ghie (native butter), to which particles of gold adhere. The snow lies deep here in the winter; a traveller, after a toilsome march, looked over a dreary white waste and asked, "But where is Dras?" "You are standing on it," was the reply. The houses were completely buried.

Huts roughly built of boulders have been erected at distances of four or five miles, the length of a dak, for the convenience of the dak-runners who carry the post-bags from Srinagar to Leh; each man carries a bag for one dak then hands it on to the next runner. They trot along night and day armed with a long stick, the little bells fastened to the top of it jingling as they go to warn every living creature to get out of the way—a necessary precaution in the dark where there are wild animals. The shelter-huts are of great value to the men, who have often in the early spring to struggle through blinding storms in the neighbourhood of the Zoji La, and arrive exhausted by the extreme cold and the bitter wind, which are much more trying at this elevation than on low ground. The snowfall becomes very much less immediately east of Dras, amounting in the valley-bottoms to only a few inches in the year, although they stand at a height of from 8000 feet upwards.

We met three native horsemen on the road, one in the rear calling out, "Clear out of the way there! This is a real sahib that is coming," and we still heard him long after we had passed, his rate of pay no doubt depending on

the amount of fuss he made in proclaiming the importance of his master, who seemed to be an Indian trader on his way down country. It would have been insulting to call out in this way on seeing another native of his master's rank approach, as it is only done to keep inferiors out of the great man's way. It was quite gratuitous rudeness to us Europeans, and was in marked contrast with the manners of the Ladakhis and Baltis, which are remarkably good.

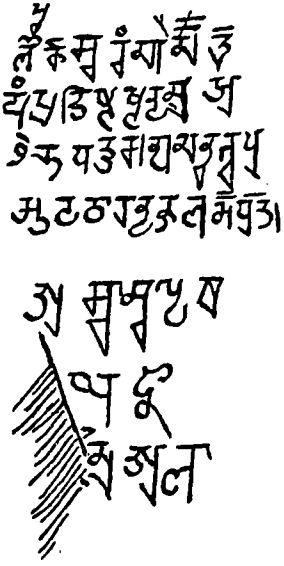
The village of Dras lies just beyond a Sikh fort with a pleasant camping-ground near it; a dry, unirrigated spot was chosen, and my tents were soon pitched near those of my two companions, on the edge of a stream, whose murmur soothed the ear and induced sleep after a long march. Here in the afternoon my ponymen and coolies were marshalled in a row, and I paid them each separately for the journey from Gund in the Sind Valley, four marches back, where they were hired. It is the best way to pay them oneself so as to ensure their getting their full price, for if it is left to a servant some of the money always finds its way into his pocket. My two extra dandymen were entitled to sixpence each (!) for carrying me over the pass from Baltal to Mitsahoi, and sixpence more to Matayan, and when I gave them a rupee (1s. 4d.) each, as payment in full, they salaamed almost to the ground.

I suppose the servants were tired and cross that day, for there was a regular upset in the camp. The man who owned the pony Aziz Khan was riding wanted a rupee a day for it, which I declined to give, as the proper charge, according to the tariff, was half that amount; but Aziz Khan took it as a personal affront, and said he would go back to Srinagar, as I was "cutting his pay." I pointed out to him that it was the ponyman's pay I was cutting, not his, and that he should have his pony and was to do

what I told him. It was the only time that Aziz Khan ever showed any sign of temper to me, and he told me months afterwards that he was very tired at Dras. Then Habibullah took off his sandal to show me a lump on his heel, whimpering over it, the great big man of 6 ft. 2, and muttering something about a pony. Next, the syce came limping with a sore place on his big toe, caused by the straw string of his chapli fretting it, for which I promised him a remedy, but I noticed that when his back was turned to me he forgot to limp. The Major had some trouble with his coolies, and went to consult an old General, who was encamped close by, as to what he should do. The Australian's cook had hired a pony without leave (because he saw my cook had one), and expected his master to pay for it, and when this was refused he went to the servant's quarters and poured forth loud abuse *in English*; his sahib hearing it got angry and gave him a beating, upon which he wrapped himself up in a blanket, sat by the fire, said he would go back next day, and professed to be too ill to cook the dinner. It was therefore arranged that the shikari was to do the cooking and make soup of a soup tablet, and I supplied a tin of meat. The Australian was sitting in his tent cutting up a plug of tobacco when the shikari appeared, and, thinking the man looked rather wistfully at it, gave him a piece, which he took away and boiled, imagining it was the soup tablet. Of course it all came to pieces, and he took the mess round to all the cooks, including the General's, but none of them had seen soup like that before, so finally it was served up just as it was.

The next morning when we left Dras at seven all the ruffled tempers were smooth again, the injured toe and heel were dressed with ointment, and there was no sign of anyone going back.

Just below the village on the roadside there are two sculptured pillars, each about six feet high, called by the people "Chomo" or "The Ladies," which General Cunningham, the celebrated archaeologist, believed to be Brahminical statues erected by Kashmiri Hindus. Besides these two, one of which is represented in the photograph, there is a third lying on the ground which was standing when he saw it in 1846 or 1847, and which he had no doubt was a Hindu Sati pillar, marking the place where a widow suffered Sati (Suttee, *i.e.* death on the funeral pyre), an act of virtue in her eyes. He says, "On one side is sculptured a horseman, which is the usual emblem, placed on the pillar of a Rajputni Sati to denote that her husband was a soldier. On the back of the pillar is an inscription of eight lines in Kashmirian Takri, which I am unable to translate satisfactorily."[1] The horseman is shown in the photograph, and I give Cunningham's copy of the inscription, as it is now invisible, being on the under side of the fallen stone. In the drawing in his book he has reversed the stone and turned the inscription to the front without mentioning the fact.



The scenery became more and more sterile and characteristically Tibetan as we advanced. The Major remarked that it looked like a country falling to pieces; the hillsides seemed to be in the act of slipping down in shaly slopes

[1] See his *Ladak*, p. 382.

Photographed by Miss Christie.

CHOMO, OR THE LADIES (CARVED STONE).

Photographed by the Author

A TIBETAN WEDDING. BUYERS OF THE BRIDE.

To face page 28.

or breaking off in fragments of rock. The grass, herbage, and stunted birches, which gave some greenness to the landscape for a few miles on this side of the Zoji La, had now completely disappeared, and were seen no more throughout Baltistan and Ladakh, except near the summit of very high passes and on irrigated ground surrounding villages. The gloomy, barren, hot-looking mountains, curiously streaked with bands of colour, rise abruptly on either hand from the mud-coloured river which boils and rages on its furious way with a roar that rivals the rapids of Niagara; here and there the mountains recede, leaving a mile or two of narrow plain, then close in once more, taking on exquisite turquoise tones in the afternoon light. After hours of riding there is a distant glimpse of trees showing where a village is nestling in its plantations of poplar and willows, used in building and basket-making, and, with extreme sparingness, for fuel; where the climate permits there are also orchards of apricots and walnuts, which ripen at 10,000 feet in this rarefied atmosphere. The air is always brisk and invigorating, although the thermometer may go up to 150° in the sun, and in the evening it becomes quite cold. The villages are always placed at the junction of a side nullah with the main valley, and are irrigated by the streams flowing steeply down the nullah, as the Tibetans have no means of pumping up the water from the level of the river to reach their fields.

This day's march ended at four o'clock at Kharbu; on the next day's march from Kharbu to Kargil (15 miles), our course lay along a narrow and hot gorge, the mountains, apparently quite sterile, rising to a great height on both sides, and the Dras river rushing and roaring beside or below the path, which sometimes climbs up the

face of the precipice to descend again in steep zigzags. It was a great delight to see here and there among the stones or in the crevice of a rock a wild rose-bush covered with red, pink, or white blossoms. There were also a few currant-bushes, a kind of juniper, and another bush called amba by the natives, but these were only very occasionally met with in miles and miles of barrenness. The heat of the sun was great, and was increased by reflection from the rocks, but there was a cool breeze with a touch of the snow in it. At last we came to a village polo-ground, a long narrow strip of dark-coloured sand bounded on all sides by small boulders, and in a few minutes the rest-house at Kharbu was in sight, and beyond it a pretty camping-ground with plenty of shade from poplars, where we agreed to pitch our tents. There was a low stone wall round it in which the Major was making a small breach to let the pack-ponies come in, when the owner appeared and said he paid three rupees a year to the Maharajah and would require compensation for the wall, which was promised him, and as only about half-a-dozen small boulders were rolled off the top he was well paid and well pleased next morning on receiving fourpence.

On the 8th of June we left Kharbu at 6.45 a.m., as it was to be a hot march through much the same kind of scenery as the day before, and we got to Kargil at two o'clock, after resting two hours on the way for tiffin. Kargil is a district containing many villages nearly 9000 feet above the sea; the hills are lower than before, and instead of being of granite are of clay and sandstone; the land round is well cultivated, and it is a relief to the eye to see abundant vegetation. Even at this great height, wheat, barley, apricots, and mulberries ripen, and willows and poplars flourish, six or eight of the latter being often

grafted on a pollarded willow. But wood is scarce and dear here, as all over Western Tibet, and road scrapings are carefully collected, made into cakes, and dried in the sun for fuel.

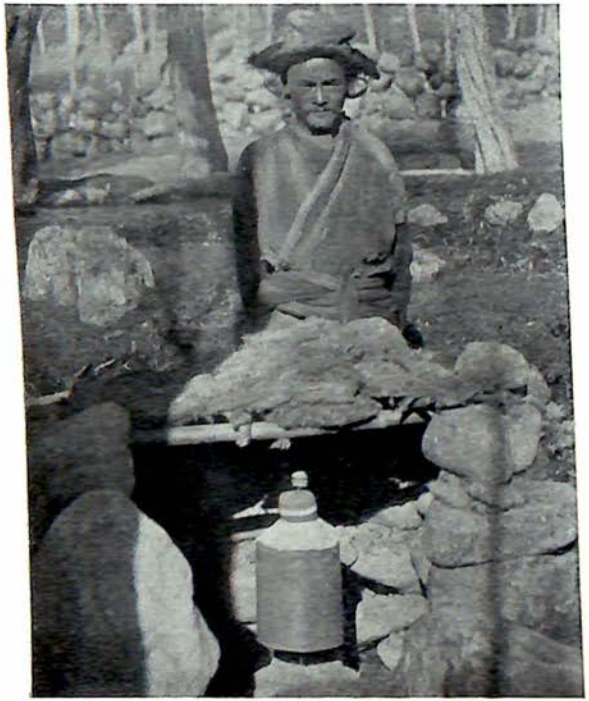
Our camping-place here was somewhat cramped, in a walled enclosure containing many poplars, and the fluff from them speedily covered the tents, flew into our drinking cups, and powdered everything we had. I went into the village and photographed some of the people, the men laughing heartily when the women looked scared and ran away.

Here we began to see magpies, always singly at first and very tame, sitting on the roadside and chattering at us as we passed, and there were sparrows in swarms. Wherever there was cultivation the lark's song was heard, and from here onwards the hoopoe's note, which we had not heard since we left Gagangair in Kashmir, again greeted us occasionally. Although the valleys of Baltistan and Ladakh are more than twice as high as the summit of Ben Nevis, yet birds and plants that require a considerable amount of warmth flourish in them, because the air is so thin and clear that the sun's rays are but little tempered in passing through it, and as they are also more nearly vertical than in our latitudes we Europeans must wear helmets to guard against sunstroke. The cold is arctic in the winter, and prevents the natives from washing themselves; in the summer they don't do it because they have got out of the way of it, and as they wear their clothes night and day till they drop, it is as well to avoid letting a Balti or a Ladakhi come between the wind and your nobility.

As it was a long and hot march from Kargil to Maulbek Chamba, the next stage, I got up at 4 and started at 5.30. It was an interesting ride, for we met

with Buddhist buildings here for the first time, and saw manis and chortens. A mani is an oblong enclosure between stone walls, from two to six feet in height, and from a couple of yards to a mile in length, filled up with stones and soil, and roofed with flat stones having prayers, passages from the sacred books, and religious emblems inscribed on them; the commonest is the invocation to Buddha, "Om mani padmi hong" (Hail! Jewel in the Lotus Flower), which is as endlessly used here as in Burma. Buddhists are particular to pass along the left side of manis on coming to them, as they believe that by doing so they get the benefit of all the prayers on them; this practice of scrupulously following the course of the sun is probably an outcome of the nature-worship which preceded Buddhism in Tibet and is still largely mingled with it. Our Mohammedan servants, to show their scorn of such superstition, insisted on the ponies being led on the other side. I sometimes remonstrated, and told them to let the poor coolies, who meekly acquiesced, do as their religion directed them. There are hundreds of manis and chortens on the roadsides, particularly near villages or gompas (monasteries), and the more influential the gompas are the larger are the manis and the longer the rows of chortens, which are sometimes built on the top of manis. Chortens are tower-like buildings from five or six to twenty feet high, sometimes surmounted with a finial, shaped, as a rule, like a globe placed on a crescent moon. Cunningham says it is "a monogram formed of the four radical letters (in old Pali), which represents the four elements—*ya*, air; *ra*, fire; *va*, water; *la*, earth, to which is added the letter S for Mount Sumeru."[1] Chortens are sometimes

[1] *Ladak*, p. 377.



By Rev. H. B. Marx.

PRAYER WHEEL,

Driven by water, and praying night and day that its owner, a miller, may always have abundance of corn and water.

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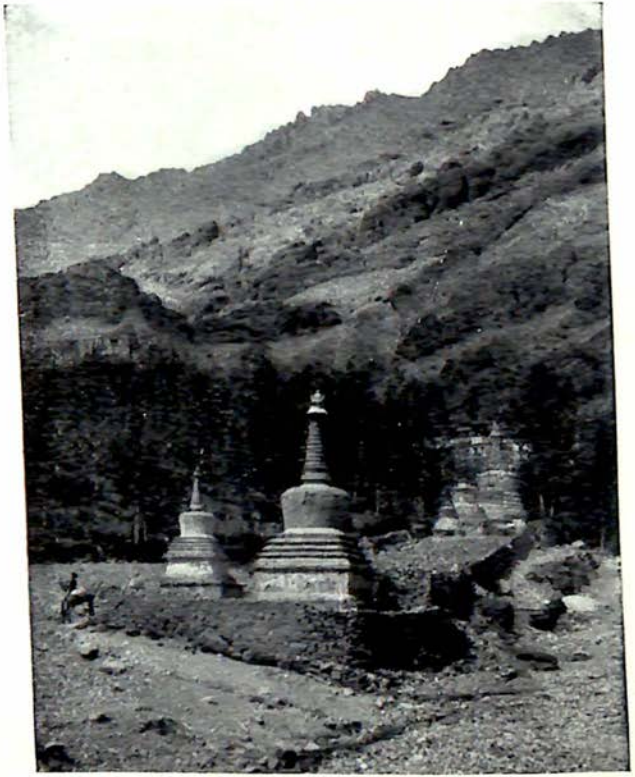


By Miss Christie.

MANIS AND CHORTENS.

merely religious monuments, and when this is the case they stand in groups of three, one painted red, one white, and the other blue, in honour of the spirits of the earth, the sky, and the water—a survival of nature-worship from pre-Buddhist times; they are, however, generally uncoloured, and contain the ashes of the dead. The Ladakhis, like other Buddhists, burn the dead; they then collect some of the bones, which are ground down, mixed with clay, and made by means of moulds into miniature chortens by the Lamas, and placed in the monumental chorten, where they can be seen in dozens through a small opening halfway up the side. Passing Europeans sometimes yield to the temptation of carrying one away as a curiosity, profanely calling it "potted Lama."

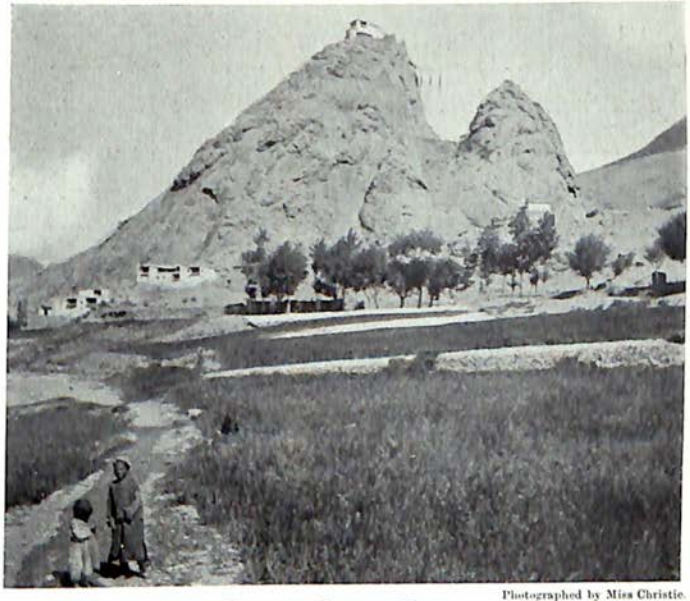
On the roofs of the houses there are many flags with prayers printed on them, and wooden frames containing what at first sight looks like a row of bells, but these are prayer-wheels turned by the wind, and men walk along with small brass ones in their hands turning them as they go.[1] Wheels of this kind are sometimes also turned by water. The idea is that the more prayers a man says the sooner he will attain nirvana, and that he gets the same benefit from these mechanical contrivances as if he uttered the invocations himself. The Tibetans are intensely superstitious, and the outward signs of their religion are to be met with constantly. Amongst the rocks and on seemingly inaccessible places

[1] Miss Gordon Cumming, in her recently published volume of *Memories*, gives an interesting account of a successful search for prayer-wheels in Japan, where she had been assured by European residents that they did not exist. They are there of very great size and are contained each in a small building specially set apart for them in the grounds surrounding temples.

on the mountain peaks and crags, flags, animals' horns, and branches of trees are fixed as offerings, and any interference with them is regarded as certain to excite the wrath of the spirits to whom they are dedicated, who will revenge themselves by bringing misfortune on the offender.

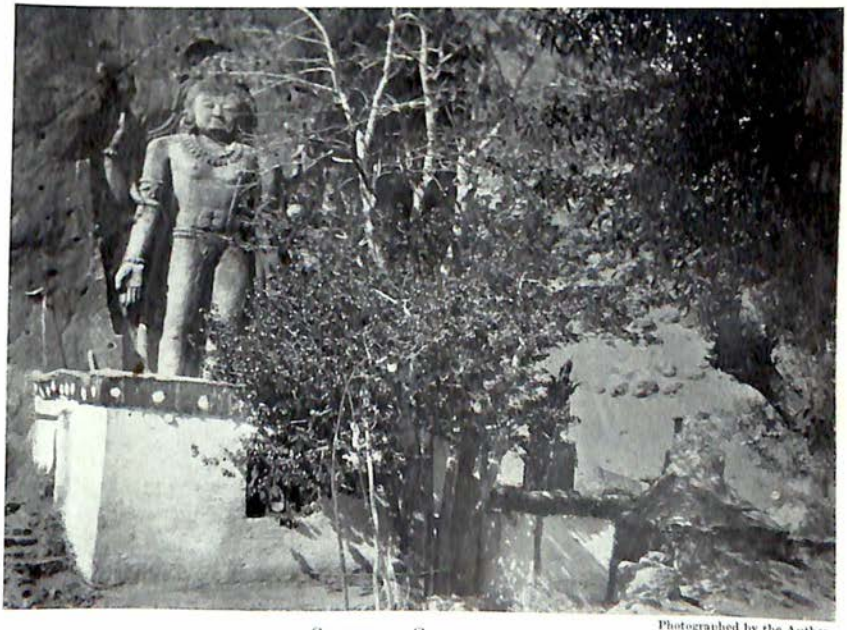
The scenery we passed through this day between Kargil and Maulbek Chamba, our next camping-place, was very varied and interesting. After crossing a bare plateau, which it is hoped will soon become fertile by the aid of irrigation now begun, we descended into a lovely nook with a large village, Pashkyum, standing amidst streams bordered by poplars, willows, and beds of purple iris, and guarded at one end by an isolated peak 1000 feet high, on which is perched a ruined fort, the scene of a brilliant deed by the Dogras when they captured it during their invasion of the country in 1835. Beyond the fort a narrow winding gorge is entered, lined with sandstone rocks of brilliant hue, which in the afternoon light become of a rich turquoise blue, the beautiful tint more than making up for the lack of verdure. Twice the gorge opens out into a valley in which a village shows itself, a green oasis. The second one, nearly twenty miles from Kargil, being Shergol, where I had my first sight of a gompa, or Buddhist monastery;[1] it is a curious little place built in a cliff, and is a dependency of the larger gompa at Maulbek Chamba, three or four miles farther on—a picturesque building on the top

[1] Since writing this narrative, I have discovered from Colonel Waddell's *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, that it is not strictly correct to call all monastic buildings in Tibet gompas; but it is the name generally given to them by uninstructed travellers like myself, and I have now no means of ascertaining which of those I describe are simply monasteries and which are gompas or monastic hermitages.



Photographed by Miss Christie.

MAULBEK CHAMBA, GOMPA.



Photographed by the Author.

STATUE OF CHAMBA.

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of a spire of rock with the village clustering at its foot.

High up on the stony mountain sides, from 500 to 1000 feet above the valley, a thin line of green is often seen extending for many miles, the line, straight as if it had been ruled and exciting the admiration of Europeans versed in engineering, gradually coming lower to where it reaches a cluster of villages, in some cases twelve miles from the starting-point. This is an irrigation canal having its source in the snow, the sole means of cultivation in the country, and if there is a winter with little or no snowfall the result is famine. The very small amount of land that can be irrigated has led to the people of Ladakh adopting polyandry as a means of keeping down the population, which is also helped by the celibacy of thousands of Lamas. The eldest brother in a family chooses a wife, and all the younger brothers become minor husbands. They are nearly always all away at work except one, and in fact the wife keeps the home together for them. If the principal husband is an only son or has only one brother, the woman may take an additional husband from another family. Mrs. Bishop, in her book *Among the Tibetans*, mentions that the Tibetan women look with great contempt on a woman who has only one husband, and that the word widow is a term of scorn and derision. They have great power, and are very independent in looks and manner. They carry a large portion of their wealth on their heads in the shape of a pberak, a strip of red or brown leather or cloth about four inches wide, coming to a point on the forehead and reaching a little below the waist behind, where it ends in a black knotted fringe finished with a tassel; it is studded all over with rows of turquoises and some cornelians, with

two or three very pretty amulet-cases of gold and silver among them. These ornaments are handed down through many generations if the Lamas do not get hold of them, each new owner adding new stones, and they may be worth anything up to 500 rupees (about £33). At each side of the face there is a large lappet made of black woollen cloth edged with black fur, over which fall four or five long thin plaits of hair, and some women have a group of silver chains hanging over these and looped up at the back. They all wear ear-rings, necklaces, and finger-rings, more or less handsomely set with turquoises showing the matrix, cornelians, and in some cases seed pearls. Mediterranean coral necklaces are in great request here. The Lamas often contrive to get possession of the ornaments on the death of a woman as a burial fee; if they do not get the pberak they must at least have a necklace or ear-rings.

The dresses are made with high-necked, long-sleeved bodices and full skirts, of dark blue, or red-and-blue striped cloth; large square mantles of crimson cloth with a green border, lined with white lambskin and fringed along three sides with silky white goat hair, are worn by the richer women, who sometimes replace them with Kashmir shawls in the summer. The poorer women wear unlined goatskins with the hair next them, as do many of the men.

CHAPTER IV.

A WEDDING AND A VISIT TO A MONASTERY.

THE morning I was leaving Maulbek Chamba I heard my servants laughing at something, and this something was a huge four-armed figure 20 feet high, cut in the rock, of Chamba, the future Buddha Maitreya, who, it is believed by the Tibetans, will be a white man. In this carving he looks like a Hindu idol except in feature and expression, which resemble those in the statues of the present Buddha, Sakya Muni. There was a large chorten in front of him ornamented with prayer-flags.

The stage from Maulbek Chamba to Kharbu Bhot, our next camping-place, was over the Namika La, 13,000 feet, a very easy pass, and here we entered Buddhist Ladakh, which has a population more homogeneous in race and religion than any we had met with since leaving Kashmir at the Zoji La. Between Pandras and Kharbu Bhot the country is dotted with villages of colonists from neighbouring districts and of varying religions in a manner that bewilders the traveller. From Pandras, the first village after leaving the summit of the Zoji La, to Chanegand on the Suru river, a distance of 40 miles, the road passes through the country of the Mohammedan Dards (the name Dardistan is unknown to them or their neighbours), with colonies of Baltis, who are also Mohammedans,

at Pandras, Dras, and Tashgam. An outlying district of Baltistan is entered at Kargil, and extends to the boundary of Ladakh near the Namika La; in this district colonies of Buddhist Ladakhis are settled at Shergol and Maulbek Chamba, where the first gompas (monasteries) are met with. Tibetan in slightly differing dialects is the language of all these people except the Dards, who speak the Dard tongue.

At Kharbu Bhot (so-called to distinguish it from the village of Kharbu, which is not Bhot or Buddhist, Bhot being the name by which the Ladakhis call themselves), a wedding tamasha (festival) was being held in a small house just above the dak bungalow, and the yard in front of it was crowded with people watching two elderly men solemnly dancing to the sound of drum and pipe. The wedding ceremonies date from pre-Buddhist times, and are very elaborate; many songs are sung, and one which forms a scene by itself "is a kind of catechism of the pre-Buddhist religion of Ladakh. One verse contains many mythological questions, the next answers all of them. Its language is a more ancient form of the dialect, not the classical language."[1] The two men who were dancing were Nyopas (lit. "buyers of the bride"), who negotiate the match, and arrange what price is to be paid for the bride, according to the custom of the East.

On arriving at the house of the girl's parents for the wedding ceremony they are not allowed to sit down on a carpet until they have answered the questions which form the first half of this song. The following verses are the

[1] *Ladakhi Songs*, edited in co-operation with Rev. S. Ribbach and Dr. E. Shawe, by A. H. Francke, Leh, whose translation of the Wedding Song is here given.

first six questions and answers out of the ten which compose the catechism:

People of the house ask:

1. The high sky,
   Whose and what carpet is it?
2. The high glacier,
   Whose and what carpet is it?
3. The high rock,
   Whose and what carpet is it?
4. The high ocean,
   Whose and what carpet is it?
5. The high castle,
   Whose and what carpet is it?
6. The wide earth,
   Whose and what carpet is it?

The Nyopas say:

1. The high sky
   Is the carpet of the sun and moon.
2. The high glacier
   Is the carpet of the lion with the turquoise[1] mane.
3. The high rock
   Is the carpet of the mountain goat, the old ox.
4. The high ocean
   Is the carpet of the fish "golden eye."
5. The high castle
   Is the carpet of great men.
6. The wide earth
   Is the carpet of the King of China.

After the dance of the Nyopas was finished everybody adjourned to a level piece of ground near, the men sitting in a wide circle, the women in a group close by. In the middle of the circle there were two or three large jars of chang (barley beer not unlike cider in taste and appear-

[1] An allusion to the blue colour of the ice.

ance), which were constantly being replenished from other jars which servants carried up on creels on their backs. Half a dozen men got up and danced, doing various kinds of steps and stampings as they followed each other, and then as many women took their places when the men sat down, all the movements being quiet and graceful.[1] After each turn the chang was served out to the guests, who all had their own cups. There was a tremendous beating of drums and blowing of pipes, and great applause from us three Europeans, and after a while the Major and the Australian entered the circle and set to each other and whirled each other round, to the great delight of the people. As soon as they stopped a deputation came to ask the mem-sahib to perform, but she did not feel quite equal to the occasion. Some small children were playing about, and a tiny black kid strayed in among us; Habibullah, who had mounted guard behind my chair, caused great merriment by seating an infant on the kid and giving it a ride, and then holding the kid round the child's neck. I wanted very much to see the bride and bridegroom, but could not distinguish them among the crowd. I should have liked to photograph them, for this would be a polyandrous wedding, but as the bridegroom is often in his oldest clothes busily employed in carrying jars of chang for the guests, I probably saw him without recognising him. It was the first Tibetan merry-making we had seen, and we were all impressed by the pleasant, gentle manners of the people. One man was very much interested in the old brown woollen skirt I was wearing which had little flecks of bright colour on it, and

[1] The dance of the pigmies from Central Africa, who were exhibited in London in 1905, was similar in many respects to the dances of the Ladakhis and Baltis of Tibet, being performed in goose file and with the same kind of shuffling and stamping of the feet, the chief difference being that the pigmies chanted while the Tibetans were silent.

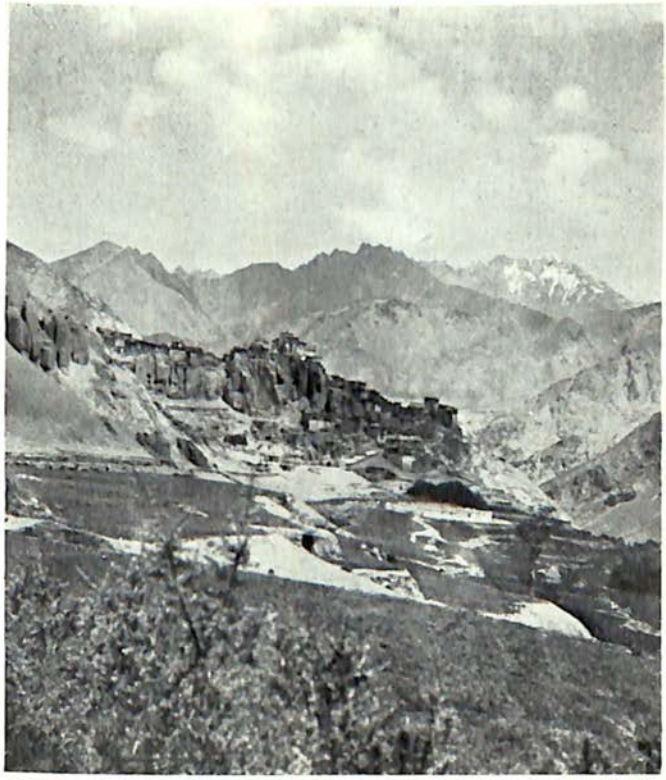
who knows, he may have been a weaver who would introduce a new fashion in cloth at Kharbu.

After leaving that village we crossed the Fottu La, 13,400 feet, another easy pass, from which we had a fine view of the snowy range of the Karakorams far to the north, whose topmost peak, Mount Godwin-Austen, 28,265 feet, is the second highest in the world. The descent of 2000 feet from the summit of this pass to Lamayuru was through some of the weirdest scenery imaginable. The cliffs are worn into fantastic resemblances to castles, fortifications, rows of mediaeval gabled houses, spires, turrets; as some of them have been used as dwelling-places and have had a door and a window or two broken into them, it is most difficult to tell whether they are natural or artificial. What houses there are have been built seemingly to imitate them, and at Lamayuru there are many cave-dwellings in the rocks which were inhabited by the people till about fifty years ago, when it became safe under the Maharajah's rule to live in houses in the bottom of the valley near the fields.

In the evening I went up with the two sahibs to see the gompa, which is perched high above the valley as usual, for the sake of defence. Two or three red Lamas met us just when we had got very much out of breath with our climb, and took us all over the place, which is very curious, full of little rooms and buildings, some built across crevices in the rock, and with many rows of prayer-wheels in low recesses in the walls which we set spinning as we passed. One old Lama who accompanied us had a small brass wheel in his hand, which he whirled all the time while his lips repeated soundlessly, "Om mani padmi hong, om mani padmi hong," the never-ending invocation to Buddha. How wearisome it must become! There were

several large rooms, all very dark, one called the naksha or map-room, though its walls were adorned, not with maps, but with fresco paintings of scenes from the life of Buddha, or of the founder of the monastery, or of saints and demons; other rooms contained images, flags, bowls of offerings of ghie, water and flowers. In the library books of the Buddhist scriptures wrapped up in pieces of cloth lay on the shelves. Most of the decorations and draperies were Chinese in colouring and design, and there was among them a stumpy, grinning species of lion which I had often seen in Japan. One god or demon was represented with strings of human heads round his neck and waist, painted so well that one could distinguish the various races they belonged to, some being white and having European features. There was a huge Wheel of Life on one wall, and on another an eight-handed god holding a mirror, brush, bow and arrow, and water-bottle; this deity is evidently borrowed from the Hindu religion. Every year there is a two days' performance in this gompa as at the one at Himis, but it is held in the winter here. We saw about a score of Lamas, but the lay brothers, 120 in number, were out working in the fields; these communities rent from the State for a nominal sum a good deal of land, from which they derive a large part of their income. A few nuns, also dressed in red, were moving about; but they are of no account, mere drudges in the gompa. Several large and savage dogs prowled about the courts and passages, growling at us; one or two lamas guarded us both before and behind from them, and threw stones at them to drive them away.

After seeing this and other gompas the thought forced itself on the attention that, though all Christian sects would repudiate with horror the suggestion that their own



By the Author

LAMAYURU.

Photographed by the Author

TOWN GATE OF LEH.

To face page 42.

forms of worship resemble in any way that of idolaters, yet it is the fact that the rituals of Hindus and Buddhists, of the Orthodox Greek Church, of Roman Catholics and a section of Anglicans, have alike developed in a greater or less degree in the direction of vestments, images, pictures, banners, flowers, lights, incense, hand-bells, rosaries, offerings, and of a taste for darkness in churches and temples.[1] An Indian mosque, in its freedom from all these things, and in its simplicity (however magnificent it may be in point of size, architecture, or the beauty of its stone and marble), is a standing protest against them, which has lasted unimpaired for hundred of years, and commands respect for the religious ideals of which it is the outcome.

The next march, to Khalatse, was down a precipitous slope at first to the bottom of a narrow gully, through which a stream flows that is bridged in more than twenty places before it reaches the valley of the Indus. Formerly the road passed along wooden galleries made in the cliffs, but these have been done away with and the road is much improved. As we were zigzagging slowly and cautiously down the face of the precipice we heard a sound of chanting far below, and when we got to the bottom and turned a corner we came upon four Tibetan coolies mending the road, who immediately greeted us: "Deo lé (salaam), backshish!" and were all smiles when a four anna bit was handed to them. Soon afterwards a pony's leg from the knee downwards, lying on the path, showed where some poor animal had come to grief. The gorge is very narrow and winding, with no vegetation but a very occasional wild rose-bush, and at last joins the Indus river, which

[1] The earliest Roman Catholic missionaries, who penetrated into Tibet in the 16th century, were so uncomfortably impressed by the resemblance of Buddhism to Romanism that they thought it must be an imitation by the devil of the religion of Christ. (See "Encyclo. Brit." *Buddhism.*)

at this point is hemmed in by rocks to a width of only 60 or 70 feet. Here a bridge crosses it with a fort at one end, and a mile further on is the camping-ground at Khalatse or Khalsi, a pretty village in the midst of well-cultivated fields and fruit-trees, where walnuts and apricots ripen 10,000 feet above the sea. The place was so attractive and I was so tired that, though I had only come twelve miles, I resolved to stop here till next day, especially as the two sahibs had arranged to do double marches for the rest of the way to Leh, whereas I had no wish and no need to hurry. The dak bungalow here is quite luxurious, with curtains on doors and windows, and as there is a telegraph office open in the summer there was a bunch of Reuter's telegrams for the preceding week lying on the table, which had been sent here for the use of the British Joint Commissioner, Captain Patterson, who had just passed through Khalatse on his way to Leh to take up his duties there for the summer. The telegrams were a real treat to one who had had no news from the outside world since leaving Sonamarg. There is a Moravian mission-house about a mile off, and the cook from there and her husband came in the evening to look at me; she wore a very handsome pberak, earrings of turquoise and seed-pearls, and six or eight finger-rings set with large turquoises, and had a pretty Indian shawl draped round her shoulders. The husband had a flute in his hand and played on it at my request—a pretty plaintive air.

To make up for my laziness I marched twenty miles next day to Saspola, through stony, barren country, with only one spot of vegetation. The rest-house at Saspola was the most primitive I had yet been in, but I had it all to myself, luckily. At first settling in the noise was

dreadful; an apparently idiotic child was grinding itself round and round in the dust in the courtyard and uttering hoarse, inhuman cries, which there was no shutting out, for there was no glass in the windows, so, as soon as possible, I got the chowkidar to remove it. Then the ponymen came to be paid, clamouring at the same time for backshish, and an old beggar, hearing that there was money going, actually came upstairs into my outer room and went down on his knees preparing to lay his forehead in the dust (plenty of it!); but the door was shut upon him, and Habibullah was summoned through the window to take him away. After this there was a tremendous hubbub, servants, ponymen, and villagers in a crowd in the courtyard all talking at the highest pitch of their voices, the syce sitting in the gateway watching it all the while he placidly smoked his hookah, till I called him to come inside, turn out the ponymen, and close the gate, on which "Silence, like a poultice, came to heal the blows of sound."

The next morning my pony was so tired that a day's rest was desirable for her; nothing loth, I remained where I was for another night, and the following morning had four hours' journey to Nyemo (or Nimu), in the only scenery we had passed through that could be called downright ugly, there being no sunshine to bring out the colouring, which was the only beauty it could possibly possess. The one oasis was Bazgo, a large village in a basin-like ravine, which reveals itself suddenly when approached from the edge of the plateau above, and is most picturesque, with a monastery and some of its houses on seemingly inaccessible rocks. Between this place and Nyemo there are some enormous manis and chortens, always a sign that there is a gompa near.

Oh, these rest-houses, how queer they are! At Lamayuru there were no windows in the rooms, but the upper halves of the doors were glazed, and the dust and sand were so thick on them that it was impossible to see through them from the outside by daylight. When they were lighted inside it was quite a different matter, however, as it suddenly occurred to me while I was undressing, so I popped out the candle and beheld the outline of a turbaned head which ducked immediately, and no doubt belonged to a dandyman (told off by Aziz Khan to sleep in the veranda), who was interested in my toilet. At Khalatse propriety reigned supreme, and curtains were tightly drawn over both doors and windows. At Saspola the rooms were upstairs, and had good-sized window places with wooden shutters, bits of which could be pushed up to admit light, but with no glass at all; and at Nyemo it was the same, except that one side of the room was almost all window, and, with a half gale blowing, the windward side of my face was covered with sand. To make up for the want of glass at Saspola and here there was matting on the earthen floors with dhurris (cotton carpets) on the top of it; quite a luxury, for in this dry climate the earth of the floors is always in process of crumbling away, and if a thing drops on it it is caked with dust and sand. The walls were so severely whitewashed that anything that touched them was powdered. The ceiling consisted of joists of small branches of poplar resting on eight or nine stout poplar poles, the whole supported by a square beam running the entire length of the room, which caused Habibullah to bow his lofty head as he walked through for fear of getting his pagri knocked off. There was no door at all to the bathroom here, so ablutions had to be performed in full view of anyone who might happen to

pass. In these circumstances I dispensed with a bath. The furniture was the same everywhere—a bare wooden table, a chair or two, a charpoi or stretcher bedstead (of course you bring your own bedding), and a looking-glass, which last is often set down before you the moment you take a seat, even in the veranda, by the chowkidar or your servant, as if they thought it would give you peculiar pleasure to look at yourself in the dishevelled condition you generally arrive in after a day's march. In the bathroom there was a zinc bath, but no basin-stand or basin, and in the walls of all the rooms there were some very rough wooden pegs by way of wardrobe. At the bungalows one meets with when coming up here there are only two sets of rooms, each consisting of a bed-sitting-room (with one charpoi) and a bathroom, but there is generally an extra charpoi to be had, so that another bed can be made up if three people arrive. It is the rule that several people may have to chum together, and those who have stayed for one night must go away to make way for new-comers if there are any. There were no locks or bolts or handles on the doors at Nyemo or Saspola, but one half of the door folded over the other in the middle, and had a chain near the top which was padlocked over a hasp in the lintel on the outside, so you had to be locked in at night and let out in the morning by your servant. The charge for the use of a room for a night is one rupee (1s. 4d.), but in the bungalows where there is no glass in the windows it is only eight annas.

CHAPTER V.

LEH AND HIMIS.

IMMEDIATELY after leaving Nyemo, the chief object of interest was a little black wooden mile-post with the inscription in white:

18
M
F L

Eighteen miles from Leh. Only 18 out of the 230 from Gunderbal, where I had left my house-boat three weeks before! The road this day was ugly at first, and there was no sunshine to give colour to sand and shale, but after a while we emerged upon a grassy, naturally irrigated plain on which troops of donkeys, lambs, and kids were feeding. The plain was a marvel of fertility for this country, being quite as grassy as a very much played-on English cricket-field at the end of a particularly dry, hot summer. On leaving this plain we saw Leh five miles off across burning sand, beyond a rock a few hundred feet high having a gompa on the top, and at one end of its summit the remains of strong fortifications. The monastery here is the residence of the Skushok, or re-incarnation of Bakola, a saintly contemporary of Buddha's. Round the base of this rock lies the village of Pitak at an elevation of 11,000 feet; it is noteworthy that a former British Joint-Commissioner

for Ladakh, on taking up his post, found it possible to exist here comfortably though he could not do so at Leh, only 500 feet higher, on account of the greater rarity of the air there, which injuriously affected his health.

Leh looked like a green ribbon across the desert at the very foot of the lofty ranges of mountains rising behind it, and in crossing the sand, which scorched one's face, it seemed strange to be only about an hour and a half's climb from the snows. On approaching the town the ribbon broke up into numberless small baghs or gardens filled with trees, and into tiny fields, some only a few yards square, terraced, or enclosed in thick stone walls. The town-gate is a two-storied building with a wooden door and seats within it on each side, on which the elders sit in an evening. After mounting some excessively rough wooden steps, and passing over a high sill, we entered the bazaar, a wide street of shops and houses with a row of tall poplars all along one side, and at the far end the Gyalpo's (rajah's) palace on a precipitous rock; its massive inleaning walls giving an impression of immense strength; behind that again is the gompa, towering up 1500 feet above the street. The few people who were about salaamed as we passed. After turning out of the wide, empty, sunny bazaar we went through some narrow lanes, smelling a little of the East, but quite clean, and soon reached the dak bungalow compound in the midst of a poplar grove, in which the Australian was encamped, while the Major was in the bungalow itself. The Commissioner, Captain Patterson, whom I had met in Srinagar, happened to be calling on the two sahibs, and asked me to join his party for tiffin, as my tents had not come in. The Residency grounds are very pretty, with a beautiful view of mountains through a vista of trees. Irises were growing on the

border of a little sparkling stream, and there were sweet peas just above ground and roses only in bud on this 14th of June, though there were masses of them in full flower when we left Srinagar, but that is only 5000 feet up, while Leh is 11,500. The climate here is very peculiar, the thermometer in the summer going up to 150°, or even 160° in the sun, and falling to 50° in the night; in the winter going down to from 12° to 18° below zero, that is 44° to 50° below freezing-point, and yet the sunshine is so warm that one can sit out of doors in it quite comfortably though it is freezing in the shadow, so that it is possible to be frizzled on one side and frozen on the other at the same moment. Even when the sun is at its hottest at midsummer the air is felt to be perfectly cool the moment shade is reached. Europeans have to wear sun-helmets except for two or three months in the winter, and Indians keep to their pagris, but the Lamas go about with their shaven heads unprotected. In the middle of December, 1904, there was no snow lying in Leh, though there was plenty on the hills. In the middle of the following month, the coldest one there, there was the first snowfall to speak of, about five inches. "Everything in the house that is not in our living-room freezes. The sun tries to do his best, but has so far failed to melt the snow away. The Tibetans spend the day on the roof of their houses to be warmed by the sun, because fuel is now very expensive. None of the Buddhists thinks of washing now; dirt helps to make the skin less sensible to the cold! My wife, therefore, takes warm water and a towel to school to let the pupils first wash the face and hands!" So wrote Mr. Marx, one of the Moravian missionaries at Leh, in January, 1905.

Dr. Shawe, another of the missionaries, who has been in

Leh for many years, has given me the following particulars as to vegetation in Ladakh: "Most of the vegetables of Northern Europe do fairly well in Leh, *e.g.* we grow peas, beans (broad and French), cabbages of all sorts, lettuce, beet, turnip, carrot, onion (not well here, but good in Nubra), radish, vegetable-marrow, cucumber, etc. In the flower line any hardy things will do well. Nasturtium, mignonette, eschscholtzia, godetia, carnation-pinks, pansy, sunflower, etc. Wall-flowers, geranium, petunia, stocks, etc., do outside from June to September, but must be brought into the house for the winter. Apricots ripen *well* up to Saspola, which is perhaps 10,500 feet. They ripen in Bazgo and Nyemo, and even somewhat indifferently in the Wazir's garden in Leh, where they are surrounded by walls. But the best apricots are at Saspola. I think the commonest sorts of vegetables and flowers grow at Himis, but I have not seen any European specimens there. Barley is cultivated up at Gya, which is about 13,000 feet. That is also the limit of trees here."

Judging from the visitors' book in the dak bungalow very few ladies have come here in former years, and only two have come without a man friend, and they, it seems, were not on speaking terms when they arrived. This year ten came, three singly (an American, another Scotchwoman and myself) two together, and the other five with sahibs.

All the people I have met on the way up and in Leh are, with two exceptions, officers who are spending their leave in shooting, and it is interesting to hear their descriptions of the different kinds of game and their haunts, so unlike anything elsewhere. The ovis ammon, a kind of wild sheep, standing sometimes twelve hands high and with horns measuring fifty inches, is the most prized, and according

to the game-laws of Kashmir each sportsman may only kill one in a season; sharpu and bharal are also sheep, and two of the former and six of the latter may be shot. These animals have hollow horns and do not shed them as stags do, which invariably have solid ones, except in the case of a kind of antelope in South America, which I was told by a sportsman has been discovered very recently to have hollow horns and to shed them. There are some fine heads on the walls of the Residency and the different forms of the horns can be noted, some standing straight up, as in the Tibetan antelope, some bent backwards, as in the ibex, and some curled like sheep's horns. Four is the limit for red bear and six for ibex, but there is no limit for pig, black bear, or leopard, while a reward may be recovered for destroying such vermin as wolves, lynxes, foxes, and martens. In many stony places which we crossed quantities of marmots whistled at us; they are often trapped for the sake of their skins, though the fur is coarse. Chakor and ram chakor (mountain partridges and pheasants), geese, duck, teal, snipe, quails, and pigeons are plentiful, and are all, except the two last, protected.

Near Lamayuru pigeons were extraordinarily numerous, and rose in myriads from the tiny fields, where they must have done immense damage to the meagre crops; but no means were taken to scare or destroy them, as the Maharajah of Kashmir, who is a Hindu, had given orders that they were not to be killed, these birds being sacred according to his religion.

Two days after I got to Leh, an American lady, Miss Kendall, a lecturer in Wellesley College, Massachusetts, who had just arrived and camped in another bagh, came to see me; she too was on her way to Himis to see the dance of masked Lamas, and we arranged to go there together

on the 20th.[1] In the meantime I had been making enquiry about the possibility of visiting Pangkong Tso (lake), one of those salt lakes in the interior of Asia which I had read about, and was curious to see. It extends into Great Tibet, and forms part of the boundary between that country and Ladakh; the western end is about 90 miles from Leh, and the road to it is over the Chang La, 18,400 feet according to Dr. Neve, author of the *Tourist's Guide to Kashmir*; 17,671 according to Dr. Sven Hedin's measurement, but considered to be one of the easiest passes in the Himalayas notwithstanding its great elevation. None of the Europeans in Leh, when I arrived there, had been over it or could give any information about it beyond what was in the guide-books, which was very meagre; but two days afterwards a sportsman came who had crossed it, and to him I applied for advice. At first he was very discouraging, saying there was nothing to see (that is what I was always being told on this journey), and that it was not worth the trouble and fatigue, but after a night's consideration said he thought I might try, as I could turn back if the difficulties proved too great, so I decided to go on from Himis and make the attempt.

I put off all visits to curiosity shops till my return, as I hoped that by that time the usual caravans, which were due early in July, would have arrived from Lhasa (a thousand miles off) and Yarkand, though the British Tibet Expedition was likely to interfere to some extent with those from Lhasa, owing to the unsettled state of

[1] For some time before the Dogra invasion of Ladakh in 1835 this festival was held in Leh in March annually. A quinquennial assembly of Lamas lasting for a month was established in India by King Asoka (c. 240 B.C.), and was followed by a distribution of presents to the monks; the institution still survives in this country in a mutilated form.

the country there. The caravans generally take from three to six months to come, as the pack animals, principally yaks, which travel at the rate of about two miles an hour, have to be pastured on the way. Great numbers of sheep, laden with salt for the markets at Leh, come down a little later from the high plateaux where there are deposits of impure salt from dried-up lakes, which are numerous in Central Asia. Large quantities of this salt are sent down to Srinagar for use in Kashmir.

I went into the bazaar to buy some muslin to tie round my helmet, and after the long journey to this far-off place, it gave a pleasant little shock of being still in touch with home to see on the end of the piece, "Graham & Co., Manchester." The merchant's name and trade-mark in gilt-thread, and the coloured stripes at the end of a piece are considered highly ornamental by the Indians as a finish to the tail of the pagri which hangs down the back, so the whole piece was unrolled that my couple of yards might be cut off the other end.

On the afternoon of June 20th I left Leh with Miss Kendall, the Commissioner and the Australian having gone on early in the day. The Major had already started on a shooting tour up the Indus Valley, and returned to India *via* Gartok and Simla, so we did not see him again. Miss Kendall had been riding country ponies all the way up from Srinagar, and, instead of a saddle, had a pad, on which she sat astride comfortably enough. This is a very good plan for a lady's pony in constant use here, because on these long marches through the mountains where the road almost constantly runs steeply either up or down hill, and a level stretch is a rarity, a side-saddle is sure, sooner or later, to give the animal a sore back.

Our way to Himis lay at first among numerous manis

and chortens, through a narrow gorge, and then across a bridge and up the valley of the Indus, which is dotted a few miles further on with villages and farm-houses, and is pleasant with the sound of running water in the innumerable irrigation channels which crossed our path and made the country green. The valley is several miles wide, and is merely desert till these villages are reached. It is bounded by rocky mountains, the strata of those on the west side having been upheaved to an angle of 75 or 80 degrees; the softer parts having worn away they leave the skeleton ribs exposed, which in the afternoon sun take on beautiful lights and shadows. Here and there on some high rock jutting out into the plain was a gompa or a chorten, and a rajah's house was pointed out to us nestling among trees. When we were nearing the end of our ride a dust-storm came on: in front black clouds hung over the mountain tops threatening terrific weather, but it ended in some heavy showers in the night and early morning. Rain comes so rarely in this country that its signs are eagerly watched for. Moorcroft in his *Travels* says that during his stay of two years in Ladakh rain fell at Leh but on ten days between the end of April and middle of September, 1822, and he was told that this much exceeded the average fall.

Our camping-ground was in a walled garden, the Gulab Bagh at Shushot, on irrigated ground among trees, but dry and comfortable. Next morning rain was pattering on the tent when I awoke, but it stopped early, and we started on our concluding march to Himis in sunshine.

Soon we came to a sandy plain covered with small boulders and stones, among which herds of sheep and goats were trying to pick up a subsistence, though after

much close looking I could not see a single green blade of any kind. We heard afterwards that this part of the country is celebrated for its good mutton. This was where I first saw sheep and goats used as pack animals.

In the middle of this desert my syce stopped the pony to show me, with a pitiful face, a gathering on one of his fingers, for which I promised him a poultice when we got to a place where poultices were possible. My simple-minded attendants often gave me the impression that they thought I carried a chemist's shop in my saddle-bag, and they are so fond of sahibs' (European) medicine, and have so much faith in it, that they would eat boxes of pills and drink bottles of castor-oil straight off if they had the chance of doing so, and I always felt that my tiny store of drugs was in much greater danger of being surreptitiously consumed than the whisky and brandy which kept them company in the kilta. The servants, including even Aziz Khan, looked quite incredulous when told that English people hate medicine and never take it if they can help it, as if they thought no one could resist such a dainty if it were within reach.

Parties of people bound like ourselves for the great yearly festival, which attracts crowds from far and near, wound across the desert, the scarlet cloaks of the women giving a vivid note of colour in the prevailing khaki tones of the landscape. At the end of seven or eight miles we came to where Himis nullah turns sharply away from the Indus, whose course we had been following; here were many immensely long manis and large chortens, some of the latter decorated with grinning masks moulded in clay and brilliantly coloured (very like those we afterwards saw at the Devil Dance), while

one had a human skull on it. The path wound up the narrow gorge, and there at last was Himis Gompa, the object of our long journey, perched on the hillside with groves of trees at its foot and a torrent dashing past. I had hoped to be in before the Commissioner to see his reception, but he and the Australian, thinking Miss Kendall and I were going to make another afternoon march, set off early and had already arrived. The chief Lamas came out to meet Captain Patterson and made speeches; there was a great blowing of the gompa trumpets, and offerings consisting of sheep, bundles of incense-sticks, and a white silk scarf were made. The scarf is an emblem of peace and friendship, and has the *swasti* or mystic cross[1] woven upon it; this and some incense-sticks were given to me as memorials of the occasion and were highly prized.

The Commissioner asked us to be his guests during our stay at Himis; we took our meals with him, but occupied our own tents at other times, and with two young subs, on their way down to India from a shooting expedition, we were a party of six, representing five countries, England, Scotland, Ireland, America, and Australia. We had a merry dinner-party, the two young sportsmen in great spirits, having got their ovis ammon, which are very shy and difficult to reach, and are only found on the hills above nullahs, which are themselves 11,000 feet above sea-level. On separating for the night we were requested to come to breakfast at eight sharp, as we were to be shown over the gompa before the dance began, so watches were compared with amusing results. Mine, I knew, was a little fast, but I was not prepared for a whole hour. One of the shooting sahibs'

[1] For a description of the swasti, see p. 248.

was even worse, for his was an hour and ten minutes fast, and as he had been called at four every morning, while on his trip, he had really been getting up at ten minutes to three! The Commissioner had the time telegraphed to him from Srinagar every day, so could put us all right. One of the subs had been keeping his watch correct by means of a compass; but I did not quite understand how he managed it, though I think a glass and the sun were mixed up in it. My scientific education is still incomplete, it will be seen.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEVIL DANCE AT HIMIS GOMPA.

On the morning of the 22nd of June we went up to the gompa and were met at the entrance to the courtyard by a party of Lamas, who showed us over the building. On the way we had passed a flock of small pashmina goats; a man lifted up the long black hair of one of them and pulled out a tuft of the exquisitely soft fine white wool which is next the skin, to give to me; it came away quite easily, for as the warm weather sets in, it grows out and is picked from the living animal for weaving into the pashmina cloth for which Kashmir is celebrated, and of which the shawls are made.

The gompa is a queer place, full of dark, ill-kept rooms with innumerable staircases, wooden and stone, the steps of irregular heights and widths, mostly broken, some sloping downwards and some upwards. Climbing so many of them took our breath away at this altitude of 14,000 feet. In some of the rooms were many frescoes representing, as at Lamayuru, scenes in the life perhaps of Buddha, perhaps of Lamas; but the monks did not seem to know anything about them, and sometimes when questioned disputed among themselves as to what the meaning was. There was a waxen image larger than life of the founder of the monastery seated in an attitude of

contemplation, and near him another somewhat smaller of the second founder, who had added to the original building, and before these were brass dishes of ghie and a silver cup, the shape of a skull, the top forming a lid. The first founder, we were told, came from Bagdad 300 years ago and brought his religion with him, a statement which revealed the ignorance of the Lama who made it. It was remarkable that the only image of Buddha we saw (and which we were not shown till it was asked for), a large brass one, gilded, was pushed away in so dark a corner that the little oil lamps the Lamas carried had to be held close to it to allow us to make it out at all. Evil spirits and six-handed and fourteen-handed gods are chiefly worshipped, next to the founders, who have the place of honour; in fact, as has been remarked, Lamaism is the religion of Tibet, not Buddhism, though the priests and people are called Buddhists. The only outward things resembling Burmese Buddhism are the umbrellas hung over the founders' heads, as they are over Buddha in Burma. There were two large handsome chortens made of silver standing on a platform in one of the rooms, with two life-size images, made of gold or silver-gilt, of the founders beside them, and when asked if the founders' ashes were in these chortens, the Lamas said no, but did not apparently know where they were. Here and there on tables were little roughly moulded chortens, two or three inches high, made of the ashes of Lamas mixed with clay. After we had finished seeing the rooms, one of them being the bedroom of the head Lama, who is at present going through a "retreat" of five years up this nullah, we went to the kitchen, a large dark place with little light in it, except what came through the door and the hole in the roof which let the smoke out. There were

several large boilers in which Lhasa brick tea mixed with flour was being cooked, which was then poured into large brass flagons. The people drink four or five tumblerfuls of this in a day, and say it is much less heating to the blood than Indian tea, which they consider unwholesome. I saw a great deal of brick tea in Burma which came from China, and so did this; but everything good in Ladakh is said to come from Lhasa, which is a centre of trade between China and Western Tibet, and the sanctity of the place adds to the value of goods called by its name.

The Devil Dance was now about to begin, the performers only waiting for the Commissioner, and after passing through a large courtyard in which some very savage dogs were chained in small kennels made in the thickness of the walls, we were ushered through another court and up a stair into a gallery, where we had comfortable chairs and a capital view of all the proceedings. The musicians were seated immediately below us; the instruments were two brass trumpets, about six or seven feet long, the ends resting on the ground, two or three small ones shaped like clarinets, several pairs of cymbals, and half a dozen drums of a peculiar shape, like tambourines, but a good deal larger. Each drum had a long handle which one man held, while another struck the drum with a thin brass rod, shaped like a note of interrogation, with a piece of leather on the end. Small drums of a similar shape were also used, which are sometimes made of the tops of human skulls. Two small pieces of bone or wood are attached by strings to each drum, which is so dexterously whisked round on its handle that they strike the parchment. The chief Lama had a little brass hand-bell with a crown-shaped handle, which he rang at intervals. He sat at

one end of the row of musicians, and had a low table in front of him. As soon as we had taken our seats the music began, and I recognised the sounds which I had heard the previous evening and again at half-past three a.m., and which were not unpleasant across the gorge. The court in which the dance took place is about 90 feet by 60, and is surrounded by the monastery buildings; in the centre are two very tall poles with prayer flags on the top and wreaths of yaks' hair a little lower down. The gallery we were in with the veranda underneath extended along the whole of one side, while another shorter gallery, at right angles with ours, in which our Indian servants sat, had buildings underneath. Opposite us the monastery rose four stories in height, backed by the almost perpendicular cliffs against which it is built. All the windows, balconies, and galleries and the flat roof were filled with people. One gallery was "purdah," that is, reserved for veiled women, having a curtain hung in front of it, and was occupied by the wife (so-called) of the Lama who had come from Lhasa to present offerings. On the floor of the court crowds of people were seated, some with a very flimsy temporary railing in front of them, others with none, but making no attempt to encroach on the clear space in the middle; a few of the men turned their prayer-wheels or twisted their spindles, combining pleasure with business or devotion. It was a remarkably quiet, orderly, good-humoured assemblage, though it included a good many Changpas, a nomad and very wild-looking hill-tribe. The Ladakhi women were all in their best clothes, with quantities of turquoises, and both they and the men gave a very picturesquely mediaeval air to the proceedings. Against one blank space of wall an enormous picture of Buddha was hung, while below it

Photographed by the Rev. H. B. Marx.

MASKED LAMAS IN THE RESIDENCY GARDEN, LEH.

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was placed a table of offerings, consisting of small brass bowls of fresh pink rose-leaves; a skull-shaped silver cup stood beside them. In the nearest corner to it there was a row of wooden prayer-wheels in a recess about eighteen inches high in the wall.

The principal door of the monastery was opposite us at the top of a wide flight of steps, and down these thirteen Lamas came, dressed in red robes and mantles, with bright red stockings and untanned leather shoes. They wore enormous masks, red, white, or blue, the colours of earth, sky, and water, some like animals, some like death's-heads, others demon-like, with three eyes and coronets of skulls, representing the destroying god Varchuk. (The different kinds of masks worn at the Dance are shown in the photograph of a group of Lamas taken in the Residency garden at Leh). They danced, hopping and twirling round on one foot or doing steps, while bells were rung, drums beaten, and trumpets sounded to the clash of cymbals; now the music swelled out loudly, now it died down into a soft accompaniment to the low-toned chant of the choir of Lamas seated on the ground.

The dancers returned at intervals, two by two, into the gompas, those left continuing to perform till only one couple remained, and when they also went up the steps, their places were taken by fifteen more, who stood on one leg and shook one hand in the air simultaneously, then danced like the first comers. After them more came and sat in a row against a wall while others danced in front of them, sometimes very excitedly. One of the seated figures wore a mask in the likeness of Buddha and was treated with great respect: another had a large white umbrella held over him as a sign of reverence. Numberless groups succeeded each other, some being boys dressed as nuns,

others as clowns, for there seemed to be as much comedy as solemnity in the proceedings, which were a whirl of many-coloured draperies, without dignity and without meaning, so far as one could see. At one stage a small square of mud was made in the middle of the courtyard and twelve Lamas sat in a row behind it; they represented twelve just men, and the mud was a road which no demon could cross to molest them. Not content with demon masks, some of the Lamas had demon faces embroidered on their silk aprons. Many of the robes were of Chinese silk, beautifully embroidered, and some of the hats were very large with high conical crowns, some of them with a flag stuck in the apex, others with white and coloured drapery hanging from it; these hats were worn by Lamas of the Bon or pre-Buddhist religion. Two men made a sacred emblem of earth with a coloured pattern sprinkled on it, and presently the chief Lama, dressed in yellow silk robes and with a bell in his hand, stood on a small tiger-skin mat beside the emblem; one attendant poured ghie out of a large brass flagon into a small brass cup which he had previously handed to the Lama, and another put some grains of barley in it, and after much music and chanting the cup was emptied on the ground. This was gone through twice, and as the Lama had taken his mitre-shaped hat off and everything was done reverently it seemed to be a solemn ceremony, but immediately four clowns with masks like skulls came in and made a travesty of the scene which amused the people immensely.

On the morning of the second day of the performance when we entered the gompa a service was going on; a dozen Lamas seated on the floor behind a row of wooden pillars were chanting prayers to the sound of instruments. On one of the pillars a human arm was hung, cut off above

the elbow and now brown and withered; it had belonged to a man who dared to lead an attack on the monastery many years ago, and it was preserved as a warning to evil-doers.

During the dance this day, a stout old Lama wearing a foolish-looking mask was hustled down the steps into the court by four boys wearing white masks (one like a European woman's face, with braided hair). They pushed him along to a seat, and then a man gave him a lump of clay in the shape of a cake which the boys begged from him, salaaming and putting their hands to their foreheads. He broke it up and gave it to them, and they amused themselves by cramming the pieces into the open mouth of his mask, while he tried to prevent them. Then the boys danced about, lunging very gently at each other, and when one managed to tap another's mask there were shrieks of merriment from the onlookers. At last the boys went back to the old Lama, who was evidently meant to be tipsy, and pushed him towards the door of exit, he swaying and half falling and they propping him up; but when he came to the founder's picture (which occupied the place that Buddha's had filled the previous day), he stopped and went down on his knees to it and touched the ground with his forehead. The boys imitated him, sprawling at full length, and everybody, including the Lamas, went into fits of laughter, though it looked more like profanity than anything else. The whole scene was very childish, but it was very interesting in view of the mystery attached to Lhasa, to see a Lama from there giving presents to a row of very grandly dressed priests, who each in turn stood on one leg and whirled round to show their gratitude. The Lhasa Lama put round their necks white silk scarves like the one that had been given to me.

We were all struck by the perfect quiet and orderliness of the audience, and by their soft voices and well-bred laughter. They were not nearly so numerous the second day as the first, and our Indian servants, who were in great force the first day, would have no more of the dance, and made very contemptuous remarks about it. There was one sight they would all have liked to see, but the Lamas would not allow it, and that was the treasury of the monastery, into which we were taken after much elaborate unsealing and unlocking of doors, the seal used being, I understand, a swasti (see p. 248). The apartment was opened in 1896 in presence of the British Joint-Commissioner (after having been closed for nine years), and again in 1900. The Lamas are supposed to be very rich, but if they showed us their best things a good deal of their treasure is mere trumpery. The monasteries of Ladakh were besieged and plundered by the Dogras when they conquered the country, and hundreds of the monks fled to Great Tibet.

In the middle of the spacious treasure-house there were two rows of Chinese painted or lacquered chests, fastened with complicated padlocks, and it took the Lama who had the keys a very long time to find the right one. When the chests were opened the contents proved to be quantities of very flimsy silk and webs of cotton and a few rolls of Chinese gold and silver tissue, these last being the only handsome articles in the collection. The magnificent dresses belonging to the gompa were all in use at the dance, however. The jewellery we were shown consisted merely of a few necklaces of Mediterranean coral, which is much worn in Ladakh. Against the walls there were some jingals such as the Tibetans used at Gyantse against our forces—long match-lock guns held under the arm and

DEVIL DANCE, HIMIS

By the Author.

LAMA (WITH PIG-TAIL) FROM LHASA PRESENTING OFFERINGS.

To face page 66.

By the Author

DEVIL DANCE, HIMIS.

supported on a rest when fired. There were also bows and quivers full of arrows, and round metal shields, apparently of Indian make, which some of the Lamas carried during the dance. On shelves there were great quantities of parcels rolled up in leather, which attracted our curiosity, and which turned out to be stores of tea, sugar, salt and dried apricots, laid in when the monastery was besieged sixty or seventy years ago; outside in a smaller inner court there were piles of wood dating from the same time. The Lamas had asked the Commissioner to give them some help towards roofing-in an addition they were building, but he pointed to this lot of wood and said there was enough there to roof the whole place.

When we went into the gallery after lunch we came upon a scene of great excitement; a man who had been poaching in the nullah, which belongs to the gompa, was being mobbed and threatened. The Commissioner had him brought up to him and questioned him, and in the end the culprit had to pay a fine of a pound of ghie to the gompa and two rupees to the head Lama.

Just before the proceedings came to an end, three ponies and two dogs were brought in and anointed on their backs with a red liquid; some ghie was then poured over the terrified creatures. They were thus rendered sacred, and the ponies will be sent to Hanlé, on the Indus, and never used again, while the dogs will be kept tied up in the monastery courtyard.

Fâ-hian, the Chinese traveller, on his way to India in the beginning of the fifth century, saw a dedication, similar to this one, of horses, during the proceedings of an assembly of Lamas, which he witnessed at a place on the Indus, believed to be Skardo, in Baltistan.

Before leaving the monastery at the conclusion of the

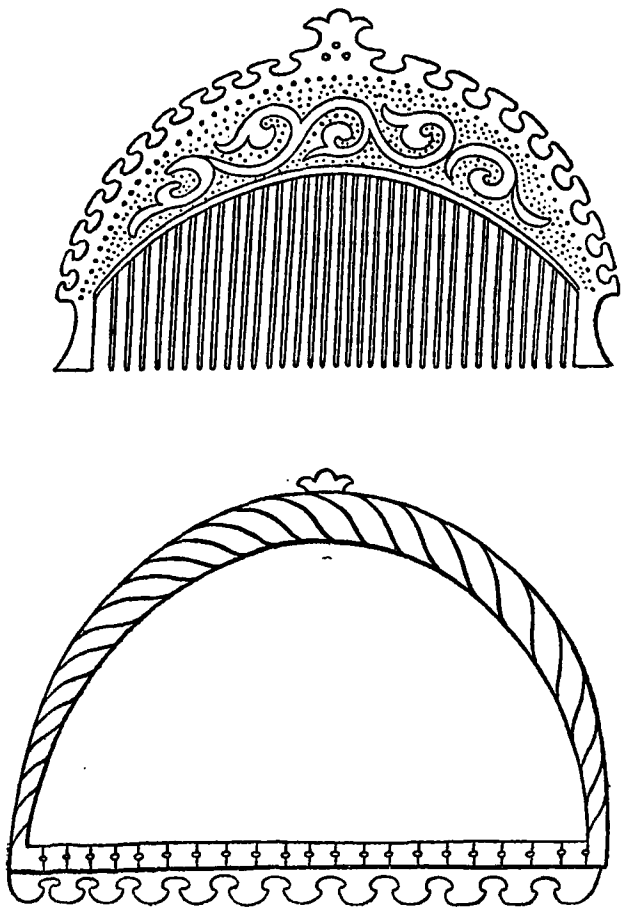
second day's ceremonies, the Commissioner gave the principal Lama twenty-five rupees as a Durbar present from our Government. The sum was very small, but was a token that the religion and ecclesiastical buildings of the country would be respected—a feature of the wise policy which makes for the popularity of the British rule wherever it exists.

When we were walking out behind the Commissioner, Miss Kendall (an American) remarked to me how a Frenchman or a German would have strutted about in full uniform on an occasion like this; but the British representative's only sign of state was that his jemadar, in the royal livery of scarlet and gold, walked before him to clear the way, or, along with another servant in the same livery, stood behind his chair in the gallery.

The Lamas gave each of our head-servants a comb in a case, both of carved wood, and Aziz Khan handed his over to me. I bought from him a rosary, also got at Himis, of beads of white jade, cornelian, and lapis lazuli, some of them possibly only imitation; among them were half a dozen made of Venetian glass, with white and coloured spots painted on a black ground, the same as some I have which were taken from ancient Egyptian tombs. In the Louvre, in a collection of beads found at Carthage, there are two or three similar to them.

In the following December Aziz Khan met in the bazaar in Delhi two Lamas from Lhasa and two women with them whom he had seen at Himis, whither they accompanied their superior, who presented the offerings. When I heard this I went down to their lodging in the Phus Serai, in the city, to see them. One of the men was out,

but the other was sitting on a mat on the floor, behind a low table which held a prayer-bell, a dorje or thunder-



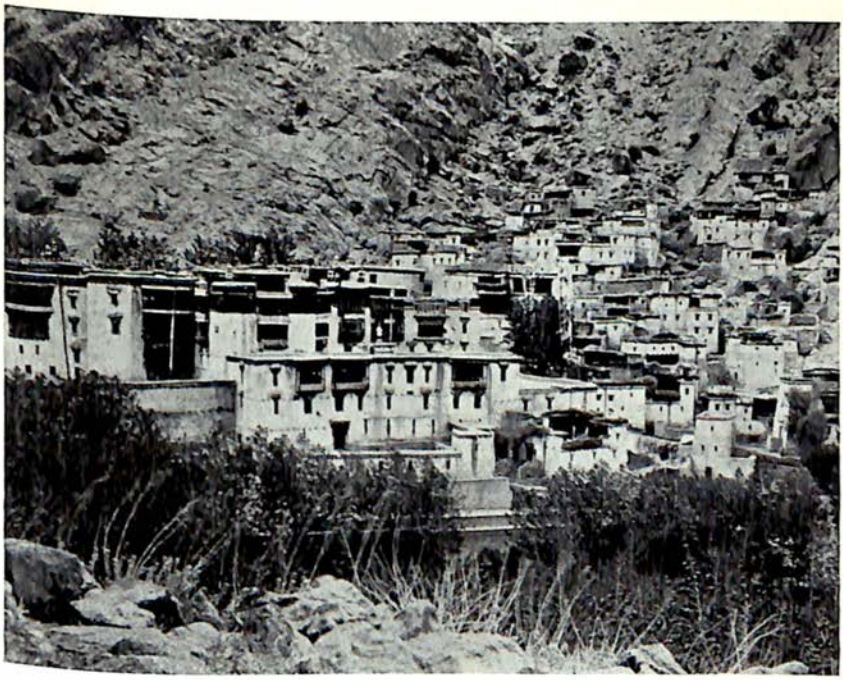
COMB AND CASE.
Drawn by the Author.

bolt, a cup shaped like a peg-measure, and also a tea-cup with a silver cover and high-standing saucer, like the

one I had bought in Leh;[1] on another low table at his elbow there were little brass bowls of oil. I asked if I might look at his tea-cup, out of which he was drinking the thickened Tibetan tea; but he was terribly afraid I was going to carry the cover off by force, and he would not let me touch the things connected with his worship. The two women were sitting in another corner twisting wool; they had broad, rather pleasant faces, and wore their long black wavy hair flowing loose over their shoulders, instead of in numerous small plaits like the Western Tibetans; round their heads they had fillets of red cloth studded with lumps of turquoise alternating with dark red beads; they also wore necklaces of turquoise and cornelian, and thick silver bracelets. Enormous earrings, handsome amulet cases, and many rings were all set with turquoises. One had a chatelaine hanging from her right shoulder very like one I got in Burma which had come from the Shan States, with silver tweezers, tooth-pick, ear-pick, and a small silver-mounted ivory tusk for scratching the head. The chatelaine was ornamented with silver tassels like the Burmese one, and they were both probably of Chinese manufacture.

I asked the Lama to let me photograph him and the women; he agreed to his companions being done, but declined for himself. He said the whole party were going

[1] The silver cover of my cup has engraved on it the "Eight Glorious Emblems" or Lucky Signs. I quote Colonel Waddell's description of them as given in his *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, p. 224: (1) The Victorious Wheel of an Empire on which the sun never sets; (2) The Luck Diagram called by the Tibetans "Buddha's Entrails," but really a symbol of endless re-births in worldly misery; (3) The Lotus Flower of heavenly birth; (4) The Vase of divine ambrosia of immortal life; (5) The two Golden Fish of good fortune, the mascots of Yamdok Lake; (6) The White Umbrella of Sovereignty; (7) The Conch-shell Trumpet of Victory; (8) The Victorious Banner.



HIMIS GOMPA.

Photographed by Beresford Pearce.

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WOMEN FROM LHASA.

By the Author.

by rail to Gaya, the celebrated Buddhist place of pilgrimage on the way to Calcutta, and asked me to write a letter to the station-master requesting information about trains, and the fares for four grown-up people, a little boy, and a dog, which I did, and he put the letter in a book. I then wished the women to come out and be photographed, but Aziz Khan said in a low tone, "He is telling them to say no." I had greatly regretted not having the opportunity of photographing these Lhasa women at Himis, and could not think of letting this one slip, so I demanded the letter, and taking it from the book, waved it at him, saying, "No photograph, no chit." He kept looking straight before him and again formed some soundless words with his lips; the women got up, came out into the courtyard into the sun and were taken, but not before they had asked for the letter, which I kept tight hold of till I had got my picture. They then salaamed smilingly and went back to their room.

CHAPTER VII.

A TAMASHA AT HIMIS. THE APPROACH TO THE CHANG LA.

WHILE we were at dinner on the evening of the first day of the Devil Dance, the Commissioner said he had arranged to have a tamasha (festival or merry-making) that night on a piece of fairly level ground immediately below the gompa. When we went out a huge bonfire was burning, flickering on the poplars and lighting dimly the crowds of people who sat all round. A young moon shone down on us, showing the bare giant crags and pinnacles of rock that towered over our heads, and to add to the illumination several men stood holding torches and crusies filled with ghie, which they replenished from time to time. It was a weird and picturesque scene for us six Europeans here in the centre of Asia. Captain Patterson thought the Lamas might perhaps consider he was interfering with their religious performances, but a great crowd of them were sitting behind us and enjoyed themselves thoroughly. All the dancers were villagers except one professional from Kargil who had come for the gompa festival and went through a dance very cleverly, flourishing a sword which flashed in the fire-light. Sometimes half a dozen men, sometimes as many women, circled round the bonfire, following each other

with graceful steps and waving of the arms, the rich red tones of the women's square cloth mantles and snowy goatskin fringes glowing and gleaming as they moved to the sound of drums, clarinets, and cymbals. Sometimes men in the audience whistled shrilly through their teeth just as the gallery people in a theatre do at home, and made us feel not so far away after all. Two girls came forward, salaamed, and sat down in front of the Commissioner, and sang a song evidently in his honour. One girl, after a great deal of persuasion, danced a solo in the midst of tremendous cheering led by the Commissioner, who waved his handkerchief aloft and called out "Shabash (bravo), you fellows, shabash," to the Lamas behind him, who joined in with all their might, with the local tehsildar (district magistrate) at their head, while the Indian servants, wild with excitement, timed the bravos with waving of sticks. Suddenly one of the servants would dart into the crowd and drag out a bashful woman like a bundle of clothes, set her in the circle, and away she went stepping out with the others. A shikari, not to be outdone, danced with a flagon full of chang on his head, and when someone held up a cup he tilted it skilfully forward so that a few drops came out of it. Just in front of us were some large jars of chang, and from these brass flagons were filled and handed round at frequent intervals, the people all having their own cups, while those who preferred tea had it made for them after the native fashion. As the evening was chilly we Europeans were regaled with whisky toddy, hot, strong, and sweet, to ward off fever. The dancing went on with unabated vigour till midnight, and as no Commissioner had ever given such a tamasha before, Captain Patterson's visit to Himis will long be remembered with enthusiasm. The

Ladakhis are a merry, light-hearted race, fond of fun, and thoroughly appreciate a joke.

Early on Thursday morning our two young subs started for India, their leave being dangerously near an end, and the Australian went away in the afternoon at the conclusion of the Devil Dance, so we were that evening a party of only three. On Friday morning Miss Kendall started for Leh and Skardo, and Captain Patterson for a distant nullah in search of ovis ammon, the villagers turning out in great force to say salaam to him, but as I wanted to have a day's quiet to think over all I had seen I stayed till Saturday. Early on Friday morning the gorge was filled with the sound of chanting by the villagers who were all hard at work, as they had been for a fortnight before, carrying stones for building the addition to the gompa. I went down to look at them, and found two men breaking up boulders with hammers (there is no attempt at stone-dressing in Tibet), while a Lama was directing the work, stick in hand, which he was not slow to use if anyone loitered or got in the way, as an old woman did who stopped to speak to me. From higher ground it looked like a swarm of ants going backwards and forwards, and the only payment the poor people get for their labour is a cup of tea. The Lamas are the money-lenders of the country, and in times of distress, which happen not infrequently owing to failure of the precarious crops, they lend sums of money at exorbitant rates of interest to the villagers and never allow them to pay their debts off entirely, so that they always have them in their power by this means, as well as by threats of supernatural misfortunes which appeal to their superstitions; it is therefore easy to understand the influence the Lamas have over the people in making them do what their own judgment might protest against.

The shop-keepers in the bazaar at Leh seemed rather pleased with our military expedition to Lhasa, and said that as the Tibetans go freely to India to trade it was unfair of the Lamas to forbid the Indians going to Tibet. There are a good many old scores against the Lamas generally, and no doubt their flocks are glad to see some of them being paid off by our Government.

The Himis monastery is the richest in Western Tibet, and belongs to the Red Lamas, as do the monasteries generally in this country. It has accommodation for 800 monks and nuns; the latter do the cleaning, such as it is. They too are dressed in red, and some of them wear pberaks, while others let their hair hang loose in long and repulsive-looking elf-locks, which have quite certainly never been combed or washed. The Lamas, who are all clean-shaved, have many of them evil faces, but the one from Lhasa, who was very Mongolian-looking and wore a pig-tail, was of a much better type. It is only the laity in Ladakh who wear pigtails.

The Buddhist religion, as it is practised in Tibet, has deviated greatly from the teaching of Sakya Muni, its founder. It is said to have been introduced from India into Ladakh in the third century B.C. by missionaries of King Asoka, into China about the Christian era, and into Great Tibet in the middle of the eighth century. It is the case in all religions that previous beliefs and customs are mixed up with them, and in Ladakh the gods and spirits of the nature-worship of the pre-Buddhists have been grafted into the later religion, making a strange medley in which the spirits of the air, water, earth, and trees have a place, as well as gods that have been afterwards introduced into the system. Hence the difficulty of ill-educated Lamas to explain the meaning of such ceremonies as those at Himis.

My last impression of Himis was a very pleasant one. As I sat in front of my tent, which was pitched in a little terraced field on the hillside exactly opposite the gompa, its white walls crowned with richly toned brown roofing, the low chant of the Lamas' afternoon service mingled with the rush of the torrent and the tinkle of the tiny irrigation channel at my feet; the sun shone on the warm-coloured crags, on whose very pinnacles (which reminded me of the Troltinderne in the Norwegian Romsdal), were chortens and prayer-flags showing against the intense blue of the sky, the whole scene being pervaded with a sense of peace and beauty.

As I was advised by Captain Patterson not to take my pony Makhti to the Pangkong Tso, which was the object of my next expedition, I sent her and her syce back to Leh to wait my return. Makhti had been such a good willing creature, trudging up and down among boulders, along the face of precipices and through numberless streams without hesitation, and with only one whole day's rest on the journey of 230 miles from Gunderbal to Leh, that I was very anxious the syce should take good care of her, and told Aziz Khan to tell him so, on which I was assured that the Superintendent of Stables at Srinagar would kill the syce if anything happened to Makhti, that the pony was his god, and that none of the food which ought to go into her mouth would go into his.

On Saturday, June 25th, I left Himis at 7 a.m. on a very good little country pony, and after crossing the Indus by a bridge two or three miles off, turned up a side valley, and at 10.30 arrived at Chimrey, my first halting-place on the way to Pangkong Tso. The road lay along a wide and well-cultivated nullah irrigated by a rapid river, and dotted here and there with comfortable-looking farm-

houses standing in the midst of their fields. At a sudden turn we came upon a gompa built on a high spur of rock jutting out into the valley, with a perfect warren of small flat-roofed buildings reaching down to its foot. A little further up the nullah there was a ruined killa (or fort) with the remains of houses which had nestled vainly against it for protection.

At Chimrey the lumbardar (or kardar, as he was called there) was a picturesque old figure, dressed in a long black gown and a purple cloth cap, with a trimming of silver lace round the front, the back turned up, showing a red silk lining; a handsome steel pen-case was stuck in his girdle. He sat down and wrote a perwana to be shown at any villages I camped at, directing that by order of the Commissioner at Leh I was to have all available supplies that I required. The paper of Tibetan manufacture is very thin, but tough and fibrous, more expensive than European paper, and the people have the knack of writing on it without resting it on anything. The manner of impressing the seal is ingenious. The end of the left forefinger has a little blot of ink smeared on it with a pen (generally a wooden one), and the seal ring, which has the owner's name carved on it, is rubbed in the ink and pressed on a spot on the paper which has been previously damped, leaving a perfect impression. I saw a marriage contract sealed in the same way at a country wedding in Kashmir, and it is also an Indian mode of sealing.

I asked the kardar if he would allow me to go into his house, as I had never been inside a Tibetan one, to which he agreed readily after some deprecatory remarks, and sent a servant to tell his wife I was coming. The house was of the usual Tibetan type, with strong stone walls surrounding a small courtyard, and stalls for cattle on

the ground-floor. From the court there was a narrow wooden staircase, such as would lead to a loft at home, up to the first floor, and after ducking my head to enter a low doorway, I was ushered into a good-sized room, in which the kardar's wife had prepared a seat for me by throwing a handsome rug over a chair. The lady was very old and very toothless, and her pberak, studded with enormous pieces of turquoise, kept waggling over to one side while she talked. When I admired the head-dress, she said she had had a great many more turquoises, but had given them all to the Lamas, not having any children to leave them to, as Aziz Khan explained to me afterwards. As the kardar is a rich man she has only one husband, the poor people alone practising polyandry. I was amused to see in this remote spot in the Himalayas some pictures from the *Graphic* and an illustrated advertisement of "James Buchanan's Scotch Whisky" pasted on the walls, given, no doubt, by some shooting sahib who had camped here. Another large room was fitted up as a private chapel; on the reredos were pictures of a god with three disciples on his right and a demon on his left; a row of bowls containing ghie and wild-roses stood on a shelf in front of them, the demon being equally honoured with the rest. A large drum hung a little way off, and on a table were a small bell with the top of the handle shaped like a crown, and a dorje, which somewhat resembles a short sceptre, six inches long, with a crown at each end; it is a copy of "the holy Dorje (*vajra* or thunderbolt) which descended through the air and fell at Sera in Tibet" (Cunningham's *Ladak*, p, 311). While reciting prayers the worshipper holds the bell in one hand and the dorje in the other.

The old couple were very much amused when I looked

at the pictures, etc., and laughed merrily when I turned a big wooden prayer-wheel which stood on the landing. A string of egg-shells hung from the lintel of another door leading into the dining-room, a perfectly bare room with one end partitioned off by an open wooden arcading. Behind it was a picture of the Potala at Lhasa, an immense group of buildings with a square gilded tower in the middle. The kardar had been to Lhasa, and the journey had taken him three months, which was very quick, but the Maharajah had sent him, so that he would have special facilities. He receives 100 rupees a year from the Maharajah as head of the village, £6 13s. 4d. in our money.

At Chimrey we laid in supplies of mutton, butter, milk, flour, and wood, as nothing was to be had between here and Durgo, two marches off, and only milk, flour, and wood there. The Lamas at Himis would not allow chickens to be killed, and none were to be had anywhere till we got back to Leh; but Aziz Khan had bought half a dozen at the Gulab Bagh, where we camped before Himis, and they rode on one of the pack ponies. All the eggs required for the fortnight's journey to the Pangkong Tso and back to Leh had also to be bought at the Gulab Bagh, where I paid a rupee (1s. 4d.) for sixty.

We had a short march of 9½ miles from Chimrey to Zindral, at the foot of the Chang La, where there was only a rough stone shelter-hut, and near it we camped. The road from Chimrey led gradually high up on the mountain side. All vegetation ceased for miles, and the intense silence was only broken by the muffled sound of the men's and ponies' feet in the soft sand, and the occasional cry of the ram chikore, or snow pheasant. By and by we came to a grassy plateau on which several parties of Changpas were settled; these nomads live in

yaks' hair-cloth tents in the winter, but do not seem to think it worth while to put up any kind of shelter at this season, though the thermometer goes down below freezing point at night; they contrive to raise scanty crops of barley at an elevation of 15,000 feet.

I was told that people as a rule begin to suffer from breathlessness, headache, and mountain sickness at an elevation of 15,000 feet, though many have all these symptoms at a very much lower level, and that at Zindral, 16,400 feet, nobody can sleep. Therefore I decided that if I had great discomfort there I would not attempt to cross the Chang La, which is over 1000 feet higher, but turn back to Leh. When we got to Zindral, however, I was so sleepy that I could hardly keep my eyes open while I was having lunch; indeed, I sat with them shut part of the time, and immediately I had finished lay down and had a refreshing nap, and slept soundly at night too. I walked about a little in the afternoon to test my breathing, but did not find it more difficult than at Leh, 5000 feet lower, so I had no further fear of the pass.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHANG LA AND THE PANGKONG TSO.

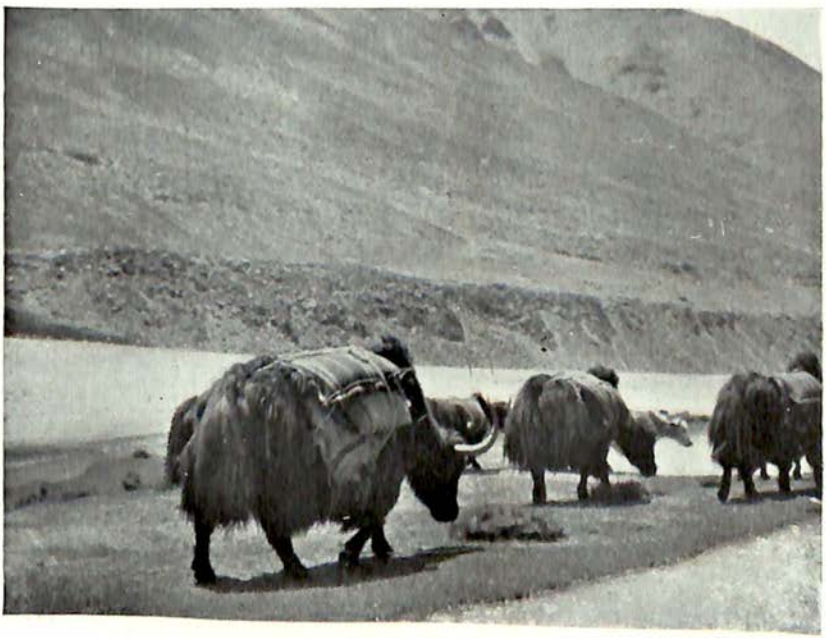
On Monday, June 27th, I got up at 4 a.m. and breakfasted outside as usual, while my tent was being taken down. There was a thin coating of ice on the pools of water among the stones, and my fingers were so numb that I could hardly use them. The servants were blue with cold, and had muffled up their necks, which orientals seem to think the most important part to keep warm. For the three or four miles of ascent from Zindral the way is among boulders, over which my pony had to make such jumps that Subhana walked beside me to steady me in the saddle, and catch me if I fell out of it. This man marched for twenty-three miles that day, and I never once heard him breathe audibly. The pony panted a good deal, and had to stop pretty often to take breath, but it was rather fat, and Aziz Khan's, which was thinner, did better. I read in the guide-books that if climbers take very light meals while at a great height, they do not feel much the rarity of the air, so I took the hint and only had a cup of cocoa and a piece of toast for breakfast, and I found that afternoon that my three servants had had no food at all before starting, as the firewood had run short, and they had none to cook with. None of them suffered except Habibullah, who said he had a little headache,

but as he was always inclined to think it rather interesting to be ill, I did not think much of his complaint. One of the coolies panted a good deal, but a chlorate of potash tabloid gave him instant relief. At seven o'clock we reached the summit, and for a mile or so crossed a level tract of crisp snow a couple of inches deep. By this time the sun had risen well over the mountain tops near us and warmed the air, and it was beautiful to see his beams lighting up one rocky pinnacle after another, and shining on the snowy range on the other side of the Indus far behind. At the summit there was a hla-tho or god's stone, where the spirit of the pass dwells. This is a cairn, surmounted by a prayer-flag and branches of willow or poplar, and with ibex and sheep's horns stuck in the sides. Although there was a little snow on the level, which was in shadow, the mountain sides were mostly clear of it for at least 500 feet up; and still higher up, though they reached to 20,000 feet above the sea, it only lay in streaks and patches, except where they faced the north; there was a solid field of it there.

At sea-level the pressure of the air on the square inch is 15·22 pounds; at 18,000 feet, a little higher than the Chang La, it is 7·66 pounds, and this reduction brings on headache, dizziness, and bleeding at the nose and ears in many cases, while if the heart is at all weak the consequences may be very serious. Even hill ponies sometimes spin round and drop down dead (there was the skeleton of one lying near the hla-tho); but in my own case I felt the air so exhilarating that I could have laughed and sung from pure joy if there had been anyone to keep me in countenance, and I was in the saddle for seven and a half hours continuously that day without

By the Author

THE CHANG LA, 17,671 FEET, SHOWING HLA-THO, OR GOD'S STONE.
Photographed at 7.30 a.m.



By the Author

YAK CARAVAN.

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feeling tired. The kardar at Chimrey had told Aziz Khan he had never seen a lady go over this pass before, and he did not think I should attempt it; but Aziz Khan said I was a strong traveller, and he thought I could do it. As it turned out, he was justified in his belief, and he did not tell me of this conversation till many months afterwards.

I gave this account of crossing the Chang La to a literary friend to read, and his criticism was that I did not harp sufficiently on the agonies of the journey; but as I did not suffer any agonies, I do not quite see how the harping is to be done. At the time it seemed throughout an easy, common-place affair which anybody could have accomplished, and I have no gift of fine writing to cast a glamour over it and make it appear the tremendous achievement it was not. Moorcroft, who was the first Englishman to cross the Chang La, says in his *Travels*, that when he did so on the 31st of October, 1821, there was deep snow on the ground, but he does not mention any other discomfort to himself or his party. He had been entreated by the native governor of the district to propitiate the spirits of the pass and prevent some awful catastrophe by making an offering at the hla-tho. This he did with one leg of a pair of worn-out nankin trousers, and the novelty if not the value of the gift seems to have appeased the deities. I might have hung an old skirt as a sacrifice on the horns which bedecked the shrine, but no one suggested it, and I did not think of it at the time. Moorcroft's companion, Trebeck, remarks that in crossing the Chang La in December of the same year, several of his people complained of pain in the head and chest, and would have stopped in despair, had not threats and entreaties been

liberally administered, yet women and girls were traversing the path without fear or apparent fatigue. Perhaps women are better adapted than men to very high levels. In my case, season, weather, temperature, all conspired to make it quite an unsensational business, and I can only regret the feebleness of my imagination which refuses to rise into heroics over it. Between early June and late September, 1904, I crossed eight passes varying in height from 14,000 to 18,000 feet, besides the Zoji La, 11,300 feet (which was by far the most fatiguing of all), and also the Deosai plains with an average of 13,000 feet, without having a touch of headache or mountain sickness.[1] The only unpleasant symptoms I had on very high ground were not being able to lie comfortably on my left side, and a disinclination to eat; but this last was on the whole a beneficent provision of Nature, as the food was not tempting or nourishing, consisting of skinny mutton and stringy chicken day after day. I often wished I had provided Aziz Khan with a gun, as an occasional meal off a pheasant, partridge, wild duck, or pigeon would have been a pleasant variety, and there were plenty of these birds about in various places, but the gun would have had to be kept out of Habibullah's way.

I did not mean to make the double march of 23 miles from Zindral to Durgo that day, but this part of the country was new to my servants, and the ponymen

[1] The intense sufferings endured by the members of the Lhasa Expedition were probably greatly aggravated by the moistness of the climate in that part of Tibet, which is very much greater than in the western districts of the country. The combined rain and snowfall at Leh is five or six inches annually, while Colonel Waddell computes the rainfall in Lhasa and Gyantse at thirty inches during the summer and early autumn alone. (See his *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, p. 467).

took us past the camping-ground at Tsullak (nine miles from Zindral, where I intended to stop) without our noticing it, as we were looking for a village, and it turned out there was none. The east side of the pass is not nearly so steep as the west side, but there were miles of boulders to skip over, which my pony did gallantly with hardly a stumble. At the foot of the pass we came upon a small frozen lake, buried deep in snow, then one of open water, then another like the first, but with a river running through it, the snow standing in cliffs about a dozen feet high; after this the road was easy till we had a mile or more of loose shale to cross, and then, as we had been five hours on the way, I asked where we were being taken to, as we were more than due at Tsullak, the intended camping-place. When the ponymen replied "Durgo," and added that it was about three miles further on, I gave the order to proceed. Durgo proved to be six miles off, through a most desolate region and over a long stretch of sand, but at last from the top of a sandhill I saw it far below, an oasis in the wilderness.

Just when we had begun to descend from the top of the pass, a young Englishman, an officer of Hussars, overtook us, who was on his way, via the Changchengmo Valley, to Great Tibet; he had heard at Leh that I was on the road before him, for in this country the roads are like telephones, and everybody knows about everybody else, where they have come from, where they are going, and what sport they have had. This was the only European I had seen since leaving Himis a week before, and it would most likely be a good deal longer before he saw one again, as he intended to spend two months over the border, shooting yak, forbidden game in Kashmir,

for the cow is a sacred animal to the Hindu. He was taking quite a farm-yard with him, eight goats to supply him with milk, four or five sheep, and a dozen chickens. He told me his dog had run after a bird on the top of the pass, and then began to spin round, a fatal sign, so he picked it up and put it in its basket, where it soon recovered. Most sportsmen take a dog into these wilds for the sake of company and of talking in English to understanding ears, though the response is only in dumb looks and signs of affection. A basket is provided, and a coolie to carry it, for the use of the dog in case it becomes ill or foot-sore on the march. A fox-terrier is almost always chosen for these journeys—a creature that flourishes in any climate, from the damp, tropical heat of low-lying Burma, where one or two are to be seen at every landing-place on the Irrawaddy, to the dry cold and extreme altitudes of Tibet.

As my fellow-traveller was doing double marches we parted at Durgo where there was a nice little bagh on a terrace overlooking the river with a picturesque bridge and a farmhouse, surrounded by fresh green fields of barley. My tent was pitched under the shade of some willows, and immediately tiffin was served—soup, prepared so hastily that the fat had not been skimmed off, a very dry cold chicken, a piece of butterless bread, and a tapioca pudding with some milk poured over it out of a Worcester sauce bottle to which the flavour still clung—a meal I thoroughly enjoyed, which showed I was not out of harmony with my surroundings.

The milk, cows' and sheep's mixed together, was bad here; Aziz Khan had four supplies brought in succession, each curdling as soon as it was made hot, till at last he emptied the pan over the lumbardar's head with

happy results for the pudding, for the next supply was milked into a clean dish of mine and was quite sweet. In places such as this where no European woman has been seen before the villagers are occasionally inclined to act as if a mem sahib were of small account; but Aziz Khan has methods of his own for speedily curing them of that delusion, as in this and other instances which will be disclosed hereafter.

On the 28th of June we left Durgo a little after 8 a.m., as we had only a short and easy march of seven miles on level ground before us, at 13,000 feet, to Tanktse, where we had to get supplies for several days. The scenery was of the usual character—bare, precipitous cliffs backed by gloomy mountains, with snow peaks showing behind them here and there, a small stream running through the valley and directed into irrigation channels where possible, with now and then stretches of sand; the population was of the smallest, hardly a creature to be seen. It does not sound interesting, but there is an extraordinary fascination which everyone feels in riding day after day through this country, and after only two days' rest at Himis every member of the party there expressed satisfaction at the thought of being on the road again. The clear, bracing air, brilliant sunshine, and constant movement are part of the charm, no doubt; but there is something beyond that which cannot be defined, and which fills the heart with an almost intoxicating *joie de vivre*. My sympathies are now entirely with gipsies, tinkers, travelling showmen, canal-boat people, and all "gangrel bodies" who loathe in their very souls the idea of being tied down to a stationary habitation.

At Tanktse I came upon the Hussar again, as he

had some trouble in getting ponies, and had not yet started on his next march. He had sent a message to the lumbardar the day before that he wanted twelve ponies, and although that number was produced, half of them were so weak and ill as to be unfit for work, which was a serious matter when they were required for two months' use. Here I felt the benefit of the perwanah which the tehsildar gave me at Himis at Captain Patterson's request, authorising me to take the ponies I had to Pangkong Tso if I could not get others as good, though the rule is that fresh ones are hired for each march unless the ponymen are willing to proceed, which they are very glad to do when the route happens to lead to their own homes. There were no ponies left after the Hussar had been supplied, as they were very scarce at Tanktse owing to what had happened two or three years before when two men came up here to do some surveying; they had a perwanah from the Indian Government authorising them to demand what transport and supplies they required, so they took all the ponies there were at this village; the half of them were killed on the journey, and the villagers had not yet got any compensation.[1] My ponymen would fain have returned, but Aziz Khan would not allow it, and of course they were not paid till they got back to Chimrey. The little beast I rode, which I hired at Himis when Makhti was sent back to Leh, was capital over rough ground, and I was very glad to keep him.

It was quite a busy scene at the camping-ground as the ponies which the Hussar had hired were brought

[1] A few weeks later their claims for compensation were brought before the British Joint-Commissioner at Leh, and proved to be very moderate.

up to have their backs looked at, to be pushed to test their strength, and lastly to be trotted past to see that their legs were all right. At last they were loaded and set off, though it was feared they might have to be changed further on for yaks, which are much slower, only doing about two miles an hour, but better for ground that is difficult and affords scant pasturage. I heard long afterwards that the sportsman had travelled for 300 miles within Great Tibet without any trouble, having kept away from villages; he lived on what he shot when his own meat supply was finished, as he could not go near any houses there, each lumbardar being forbidden by the Lamas at Lhasa on pain of death to allow a foreigner to pass through his village. It was of course out of the question for me to attempt to cross the border in such circumstances.

Immediately after leaving Tanktse on Tuesday morning we passed a gompa perched on a shelf of rock on the face of a cliff; it had formerly been a fort, but was stormed and destroyed (by Dogras probably), and then taken possession of by Lamas, who repaired and rebuilt it, and very picturesque it looks. A narrow passage between two rocks, looking like an entrance into Hades, led into a scene of utter desolation, and after a short ascent we looked down into a valley with a stream running through it and with a little sparse vegetation, but showing no attempt at cultivation, though any spot of ground that can be irrigated is invaluable here. The phenomenon was explained by the fact that a great part of this valley is covered with patches of salt, it having once been the bed of one of those salt lakes which are so numerous in Central Asia, and the stream is brackish. On the bare mountain side above it two

or three small trees grew near a rill coming down from the snows, and a Lama had chosen this place for his seven years' retreat from the world, of which one and a half had passed. A man goes occasionally with supplies of barley flour for him, and, as one of my servants remarked, he had nothing to do all day and all night but drink tea and do "pooja" (worship), which consists principally in turning a prayer-wheel and muttering over and over again the ejaculation to Buddha, for prayer in our sense of the word it cannot be called, "Om mani padmi hong." It was the same kind of stern, dreary place that the early Christian hermits fled to from the temptations of the world, as indeed hermits of all religions have done.

On leaving this valley the road entered a wider one where there was some herbage for a flock of pack-sheep to feed on—large strong creatures with remarkably small heads and a great quantity of very long wool hanging about their hind legs. A little further on their owners were sitting round a fire, sheltered from the wind by a neatly built low wall made of the packs they had taken off the sheep. The packs consisted of pairs of small brown striped canvas bags fastened together, each bag holding 20 lbs. of salt, which the Changpas collect from the salt-beds and send down to Leh and Kashmir. Each sheep carries a pair of the sacks thrown across its back. I was fortunate as soon as I reached the next camping-place, Maglib, in being able to take a picture of a caravan of laden yaks—shaggy black creatures with huge horns, some of them having a white stripe along the spine and a long thick white tail.

The camping-ground at Maglib did not look inviting, no trees, no shelter, hardly any cultivation, and only

some ruinous-looking stone huts by way of a village; but there are always some unlooked-for beauties in what are, at first sight, most unpromising places if one stays long enough to find them out. While strolling up and down this evening I saw the most exquisite moon-rise that I have ever beheld. The light of the moon caught the mountain tops nearly an hour before she herself was visible over the shoulder of the hill, and as the silvery light crept slowly down, it gave them a mystical, far-off look as if they were floating away from their deeply shadowed bases. When one side of the valley was at last brightly illumined the other side was only touched in parts by the moonbeams, and the effects of light and shade were lovelier than can be imagined.

After Maglib the valley became quite awful in its desolation, the only signs of life for many miles being two eagles circling high over-head and casting their great shadows on the ground, and a few tiny lizards scampering over the hot stones. The intense silence was not even broken by the sound of running water, for the stream whose course we followed glided noiselessly here over sand instead of brawling over stones, as it did lower down, and we went on mile after mile without a word spoken. The colouring of the hills was exquisite in the great slopes of warm yellow sand, the deeper tones in the crevices of the rocks, and the violet cloud shadows which floated over them. There was a tiny lake on which numbers of wild duck were swimming, about nine miles from Maglib, and a man came over and told us we ought to camp here as there was no good water beyond, but it was so far away from Lake Pangkong, which I was making ten marches specially to see, that I gave the word to go on to Lukong, a mile and a half from the lake. The people

at Maglib told Aziz Khan that the lake was only one dak, meaning about four or five miles, from there, and that I could easily go over for the day without troubling to take the camp, but my two guide-books say it is 13 miles from Maglib to Lukong and I would not trust to any native estimate of the distance. As it turned out it was not till after four hours' riding that we caught the first glimpse of the sapphire blue waters of the lake, and it took another hour to reach Lukong, which we did soon after twelve. We were now within twenty miles, as the crow flies, of the frontier of Great Tibet.

Two hours after my arrival at the camping-ground, as there was no appearance of the pack-ponies, Aziz Khan went to look for them, and presently arrived with the news that Habibullah, who was in charge of them as usual, had been riding a bare-backed pony without even a halter, and it had stumbled and thrown him, and he had broken his collar-bone. He soon arrived on a baggage pony, and to my great relief I was told there was a Changpa hakim (or doctor) in the village who could set the bone. The village, like all those on this side of the Chang La, consisted of three or four scattered houses, and seemed an unlikely place to find surgical aid in. The hakim came immediately, an old man in a dingy white woollen robe and a dark-coloured tam-o'-shanter shaped cap, and set to work. Habibullah was seated on the ground with his arm stretched out across the knees of a man beside him; the hakim measured out three spoonfuls of powdered cedar-wood in a small brass spoon, mixed it with a little water, and painted the shoulder with it, then pulled the arm straight out with all his might. Next, a piece of pagri, several yards long, was produced and wrung out of cold water (Habibullah

whimpering "garum pani," hot water, but that was refused), and rolled tightly into a rope with which the shoulder was bandaged. The patient seemed to suffer very little during the setting, and the hakim said he would be able to use the arm in four days, which I doubted, as it had not even been put in a sling, and nothing had been done to remedy the depression of the shoulder caused by the fracture of the collar-bone, and I doubted still more when I heard a few hours later that Habibullah was using the arm. I made a remark about the absence of a pad under the arm-pit, which must have been repeated to the hakim, for the next day the patient was going about with a stone wrapped up in a piece of paper and fastened on his chest by way of supplying the want!

After tiffin I rode down to Lake Pangkong, which is nearly three miles from Lukong; it is one of a chain of lakes 90 miles in length, and is itself 40 miles long; about a dozen miles of its south-eastern shores are in Great Tibet. It is from two to four miles broad, and is a mere ribbon of deep and exquisite blue between the mountains bounding it on both sides. The water is very salt and bitter to the taste, something like that of the Dead Sea. There were clouds of mist blowing about the mountains and skimming across the surface of the water, and the wind was cold, with occasional showers of sleet; but that was not surprising even at this season, the very beginning of July, at an elevation of 14,000 feet. I should have liked very much to see the other end of the lake which is much more beautiful than this; but one of my guide-books, Duke's *Kashmir Handbook*, gives hardly any information about this route, while the other, Neve's *Tourist's Guide to Kashmir*,

says that the only camping-places near this end are in sandhills, that there are no villages, consequently no supplies, and as my men did not know the district it was hardly safe to venture without at least being sure where we could find drinkable water. The natives have no idea of distance, so one cannot trust to their directions. I found out afterwards that we ought to have gone not to Lukong, but to Spangmik on the south shore (where there are two houses, and milk and fuel are to be had), and continued along the lake-side past several tiny hamlets, to Shushol (50 miles), a considerable village. Thence there is a track over an easy pass to Maya on the Indus, where the road to Leh is joined. This route would have taken nearly a week longer, but would have been preferable to retracing my steps for 100 miles and crossing the Chang La twice.

Supplies are difficult to obtain in this part of the country. Nothing was to be had at Maglib and Lukong, and we took mutton and milk from Tanktse, while the only fuel was boortsia, a bush rather like furze that grows in the sand. From Maglib to Lukong the route is along the level bottom of valleys, which were once the beds of lakes, now shrunken to narrow streams. Their former beaches, the elevated alluvial plateaux known as karewahs in Kashmir, which project from the lofty mountain sides, stand like low shelves from 100 to 200 feet high on each side of the valleys alternately; it rarely happens here that there are two karewahs opposite each other.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM PANGKONG TSO BACK TO LEH.

As it seemed advisable to take Habibullah to the hospital at Leh as soon as possible, we only stayed for one night at Lukong, and started on the return journey at 7.30 a.m. on the 2nd of July, a cold, bright, windy morning on which the lake looked lovely; by the middle of the day the weather was quite hot.

On the desert one of the men picked up a dead jungle dog to show me. It looked as if the flesh had been dried up and mummified inside the skin by the heat of the sun and of the sand combined. Jungle dogs are very like jackals, except that their tails are not bushy, and here they kill and feed on bharal (mountain sheep), which are found on the hills. They even attack and kill ponies; two of them had been prowling round the camp the previous night, and had to be chased away.

I camped again at Maglib where I saw the beautiful moon-rise a few nights before, and after having had some lunch and fed the chickens, which rode on one of the pack-ponies, and had dwindled down from five to two, I sat in front of my tent enjoying the sunshine and the ripple of the water running past within a yard of me. The chickens were tied together by the leg with a string about a yard long, so that while they both

kept still they did not feel the restraint; but one might be comfortably settled for a nap when the other began pecketting about and upsetting its companion's quiet, in a way that reminded one of the bond of holy matrimony.

Three women passed, one spinning, one turning a prayer-wheel, and one driving a donkey, and I ran after them with my camera while the men shouted to them to stop. I photographed the group, only the donkey, donkey-like, wandered out of the picture. The Ladakhi women nearly always put their hands over their mouths when they are being photographed, as they did now. I had seen plenty of spinning, but no weaving, and asked Aziz Khan who did it. "The ladies," he replied, and added that his "lady" at his home had woven the pashmina pagri he was wearing, and embroidered the pattern across the end of it, and that it was "awful nice, awful warm."

A knowledge of botany would have added greatly to the interest of this part of my journey in particular, and I deeply regret my lack of it. There were quantities of celandine, or a flower very like it, at Maglib, on the patches of grass by the stream; and at Zindral, 16,400 feet up, there were clumps of flowers like grape hyacinths set in clusters of woolly lancet-shaped leaves. Small purple vetches grow at 14,000 feet; but I did not see any of the dwarf irises which abound on the other side of the Chang La in every watercourse, though from here to the foot of the pass the elevation is only about 13,000 feet, and though they grow freely at that height at Himis, as does the wild rose, which is also conspicuous by its absence here. The wind rushing through these gorges is cold even at midsummer, and always blows

strongly in the afternoon or evening: it must check vegetation more than the height alone would do. General Cunningham notes that the wind goes round the compass once in 24 hours in Ladakh, being south about midday and north during the night.

When Aziz Khan brought me my dinner he said the broken ends of Habibullah's collar-bone were half an inch apart, so I told him he must help me to set it as soon as I had made a pad to go under the arm. The rung of a chair with a pair of socks rolled into a hard ball at the end of it made quite a decent pad, and I took it over to the servants' tent from which three men emerged, though it is only about six feet square and the patient's charpoy took up more than half the space; but these creatures can fold themselves up like grasshoppers and tuck themselves away in any odd corner. Habibullah was lying with his shaven head covered with a skull-cap close to the entrance, so I had only to put my hands inside and, with Subhana's help, I fastened the pad securely and put the arm in a sling, giving instructions to Aziz Khan that they were not to be moved, and that he was on no account to attempt to put that arm in a sleeve.

Next morning a pitiful voice said, "Good morning, Miss Sahib," and there was Habibullah with both arms in his sleeves! Imagine my wrath, but I promptly came to the conclusion that no man with a broken collar-bone could wriggle in and out of his clothes as he did, and I determined not to worry myself any more about him. He moaned at every breath he drew when I was within earshot, gazing at me with great pathetic eyes, till at last I said, "What a baby you are, Habibullah!" "I not ba-ba, Miss Sahib," almost weeping. "Yes," I said,

"you are—a great big ba-ba." Aziz Khan got tired of his moans and ordered him to stop them, which he did when he found they gained no sympathy. The Kashmiri are the most unmanly race on the face of the earth, I do believe.

It was very cold all the way from Maglib to Tanktse; in the night sleet was pattering on my tent, and there was a fresh fall of snow on the near mountains, but by noon it was very hot. We came through most dismal scenery amid quantities of fallen boulders, walls of stones as if they had been piled up by man's hands, rocks and cliffs blackened as if by fire, with a ruined watch-tower on a peak, as if this desolation were worth guarding or attacking. On turning a corner we suddenly came on Tanktse, with its trees and emerald fields and cottages; the lumbardar and two or three villagers came to meet us with smiles as if we were old friends, and indeed it seemed like coming home at each place where we had camped before.

The next day when we were passing a small hamlet between Tanktse and Durgo two women came forward, one carrying a brass bowl of barley flour and the other one of chang, and offered my ponyman refreshment. He took a small bowl out of his coat into which some flour was poured and some chang on the top of it, which he drank, and this was repeated till I began to be rather alarmed, as he had taken so much of this mixture the previous night that he forgot to give the pony any water. Aziz Khan says the people often take two seers (4 lbs.) a day of it, and it is their only food. At last when the man had had enough, he mixed what was left into a kind of dough with a grimy forefinger and put it, in the bowl, back into his coat for future use. As there

was no sign of any payment I asked if it was a gift, and was told that "all man here brother," and they give each other food when travelling. A mile or two further on another meal was offered, which the ponyman declined, but on being pressed drank a little chang. The day after the same thing happened, but this time the hospitality was extended to me in the shape of a bowl of milk, which I was afraid to accept, as it would have been risky to drink it unboiled considering the habits of the Tibetans. The men wear long (once) cream-coloured woollen chogas or coats, black across the shoulders with grease from their pigtails and dust from the packs they carry; and dark-coloured woollen caps lined with black sheepskin, occasionally ornamented with a strip of scarlet cloth across the crown. Their clothes are often full of holes which allow glimpses of a cleaner garment underneath, bearing out the theory that they put on their new clothes, when they get any, underneath the old ones. However dirty and ragged they are they always wear a pair of brightly shining brass bangles, and earrings of silver wire about an inch and a half in diameter, with pieces of turquoise and cornelian strung on them. They have rather Mongolian faces, with beautiful teeth, which they show a good deal, as they are often smiling and laughing.

A tiny solitary tent on the desert was the shop of a man from Leh, who sells tea and sugar, and moves slowly through the country, stopping a couple of months in a place where it looks as if he might have three or four customers, but he always fixes his quarters on the line of route for caravans from up country. He was going to Lukong, which we had just left.

After a halt of one night at Durgo, where we had

camped after crossing the Chang La, we ascended quickly to that pass by a different way from the one we had made the descent by, easier and more of a thoroughfare; though even here, when we were going down into the depths of a gorge which crossed our path, my feet were on a level with the pony's ears. At the top of an ascent there was a hla-tho with prayer-flags and antelope's horns, like the one on the summit of the Chang La, and our ponymen as they marched did pooja in a loud, short chant to the spirit inhabiting it. I am indebted to the Rev. A. H. Francke for the following explanation:

"When the Ladakhis cross a path they say *Lhala sollo, lhala mchoddo* (given to the gods, offered to the gods). It is a pre-Buddhist invocation, and refers to a stone which they add to the hla-tho, or to a new prayer-flag, or any little thank-offering."

The camping-ground was by the side of a lake at the foot of the pass, and as we did not get there till nearly two, and I had not dismounted since starting, seven hours before, I was rather tired. It was cold and windy, with gloomy clouds hanging about the mountains, foreboding bad weather for the pass on the morrow. While waiting for the pack-ponies I chose the most comfortable-looking stone I could find, and tried to imagine it was an easy-chair in which a nap could be taken, but it would not do. At last a little before five, twelve hours after I had got up in the morning, the ponies appeared, and in another hour the tent was put up, I had had some tea, and was lying down snugly covered up in my nice little camp-bed, only leaving it for half an hour while I dined. In the night I heard sleet pattering on the roof, and when I finally awoke in the morning all sorts of terrors started up before my imagination—had I miscalculated the distance

and camped at the wrong place, would the cold wind on the top of the pass make me faint or perhaps stop the beating of my heart altogether, would the snow be so deep that I should be obliged to walk gasping for breath at every step? etc., etc. To each phantom I sternly remarked, "It *has* to be done: there is no wood and no food to be had here, and we *must* move on." Aziz Khan came soon after seven, very much wrapped up, and said it was too cold to start before half-past eight, but he had sent his kitchen things off and arranged that I should have a more comfortable arrival than the previous day's. Habibullah had been in charge and must have loitered on the way, for though he said the reason of the delay was that the ponies were bad and not properly shod, yet this day they came in quite in good time. I had told him that if this happened again I would cut his pay, and there is nothing that brings an Indian or Kashmiri up to the mark so quickly as a threat of that kind. In a household when a thing is lost, the assurance from the master or mistress that no wages will be paid till it is found always ends in its being produced.

Well, I got up and dressed in my warmest clothes, had a light breakfast, and set off feeling quite rested and fresh, all the morning's terrors having vanished. It was not very cold, the wind had fallen and the track was rideable all the way, though there was a good deal more snow on it than when we crossed a week before. A heavy shower of sleet fell for half an hour, and the mountain tops were lost in mist and gloom, but after passing the summit we left all that behind. When things looked their blackest there was a sparrow hopping about. None of my party showed the slightest symptom of distress, and I felt none myself. I had calculated that

it would take at the shortest four and a half hours to go over the pass if I had not mistaken the distance; but it only took three and a half, and soon after twelve I was sitting on a sunny, grassy bank by the side of a clear stream wimpling over grey granite, with a herd of yak browsing on a stony hill-side opposite, though there was quite good grass about fifty feet below them: they lick the lichens off the rocks, and can pick up a subsistence where there is no food but this for them. A number of the Changpas they belonged to were grouped round a fire on the meadow near, with the brown-striped packs built up neatly as a sheltering wall. Presently three Lamas, one carrying a prayer-wheel and another a flag, with two pack-sheep following them, came round a corner and crossed the stepping-stones—a most picturesque group, which I wanted to photograph, and I called to Subhana to give me my camera, quick! but they came so suddenly on the scene that I had not time. Subhana asked them to wait, but, when they saw what it was for, they waved their hands in dissent and passed on. I followed them, and Subhana called out that the mem-sahib would give them backshish; but they took no heed, and as this is a country one cannot hurry in without paying the penalty of headache and palpitation, I had to let them go. I rested for nearly two hours, having the satisfaction of seeing the pack-ponies pass on their way to Chimrey, and when I got to the camping-ground they had just arrived, though I came the last part of the road very quickly. My easy canvas chair was quickly unpacked and set up, and I read *Henry IV.* while the tent was being pitched. The ponymen had come from here, and while one of them was busy hammering in tent-pegs a little child came toddling in

to greet him. I went to ask if it was his, and what its name was. It was a boy and was called Lama, and was going to be a monk, which was why it was dressed in a red frock. It was a funny-looking, beady-eyed little thing; and oh, its nose! It was in the same state that a Japanese child's nose is generally in, and most people know from books, if not from sight, what that is.

When we were on this road before I had seen on the manis some nice thin slate-stones with inscriptions carved on them, much more portable than the sandstone boulders which are used for this purpose as a rule, so I carried off a small one, and hope the giver of it will not get into trouble in consequence with the recording angel, who will pass through the land at the last day, writing down the names of those who have contributed to the manis, and punishing those who have not done so. The people employ the Lamas to carve the stones for them.

The evening I arrived at Chimrey, Habibullah, looking more melancholy than ever, came to say he would like to go to the hospital at Leh next morning. As I was going to stay two nights at Chimrey, and make a couple of marches of the thirty miles to Leh, I ordered a pony for him and sent him off. I had already taken the pad and sling from him, as he had got them all out of place, and I thought if the arm were not tied up, he would forget, and use it, as he forgot his limp; but instead of that he went about with it in an imaginary sling, and made feeble attempts to do things with his left hand, calling for Subhana's help. It was amusing to see how Aziz Khan ordered Habibullah, and Habibullah ordered Subhana, and Subhana ordered the ponymen.

I paid off the ponymen at Chimrey, where I had hired them for the journey to Pangkong Tso. For doing ten

marches, one of 22 miles and several of 17 miles, and crossing the Chang La twice with seven ponies, including two for riding, the charge was only 32 rupees (£2 2s. 8d.).

The valley below Chimrey looked quite richly cultivated after the barren country we had been in lately, with its long strip of green fields, comfortable farm-houses set among trees, baghs full of willows and poplars, masses of wild roses, and actually a group of elms! It is farmed by the Himis Lamas, and its look of prosperity does them credit. While riding along we passed three women who were sitting in a field spinning, and Aziz Khan called to one of them to come and let me see how she did it. She put a small earthenware cup on the ground and the end of her spindle in it, and drew from a lump of very soft wool in her left hand a beautifully fine and even thread. Her clothes hung in tatters, but she had some turquoises in her head-dress, and wore a pair of bracelets, which at first I took to be linen cuffs, about two inches broad; they were the lips of conch-shells, and cost two or three rupees a pair. Little girls wear small ones, which are sawn off when they become too tight, and are replaced by larger ones. There is hardly a woman to be seen without them, and it is curious that this fashion should prevail so many weeks' journey from the sea. When the poor spinner was handed a small backshish she bowed down to the ground thrice, clanking her bracelets together each time. We soon got into the valley of the Indus with Himis nullah just across the river, the hills opposite looking more than ever like skeleton ribs sticking up through the earth. I had tiffin in a small field, sitting on the ground with my back against a tree and my feet stretched out in front, when

some kids came and stared at me with their yellow eyes, and sniffed at my boots, as if they fancied they might be some kind of food hitherto unknown to them. How the sheep and goats manage to live and grow and put flesh on their bones in the barren deserts they are turned into is a never-ending wonder, and shows how well adapted they are to their surroundings. I had not been seated long when the pack-ponies passed with Subhana marching ahead and getting them along famously, and as soon as I had finished my meal, we set off once more. We overtook and passed two Lamas on ponies hung with bells, and a poor little foal toiling after them, looking like a piece of skin doubled and stuck on some crooked sticks. Foals always run after their mothers on a journey in this part of the world.

We kept to the right bank of the Indus in returning to Leh from Chimrey, and camped, after a march of 16 miles, at what might be called a small town—Tikhzey. The road is level all the way to Leh, and is described as hot; but that day it was quite chilly, the sky was overcast, and mists were hanging on the mountains after a night of pouring rain, with the wind rushing through the tree-tops.

There is a large monastery near Tikhzey, climbing up a hill to the sky, in the usual manner of Tibetan monasteries; the land below it belongs to the Lamas, and is well irrigated and cared for, and the farm-houses are in good repair. There was thus an air of high cultivation and prosperity about that district which was very striking after the cold, backward regions we had passed through, though in any other country the barren hills and miles of sand and stones bounding the fields even here would have attracted the attention more than the strips of

verdure. Some of the houses had pretty triple-arched wooden window-frames, each arch framing a red, white or blue chorten, standing inside.

About two miles from Leh there is an enormously long mani, stretching 900 yards, and another close to it is nearly as long, the two together extending for about a mile; and all about them on the desert there are numerous rows of chortens which were built by former Gyalpos (rajahs) of Ladakh, and are in some cases burial-places.

CHAPTER X.

LEH. A FUNERAL, SHOPPING, AND A TAMASHA.

On arriving at Leh on the 8th of July, I called on Dr. Shawe, the Moravian missionary in charge of the hospital, to see about Habibullah's collar-bone, which, as it turned out, was really broken, but so close to the shoulder and so imbedded in muscle as not to be easily detected by a non-professional person. The bone had been set, but the patient contrived to wriggle inside his bandages—in his sleep, he said. Since then he had been tied up tremendously tightly, but he thoroughly enjoyed the rôle of invalid, not having any pain, and it was quite superfluous to pity him. As he would not be able to use his arm for a month, and we could do quite well without him now that I had parted with the dandy, for which two men were required, I decided to send him home to Kashmir from Khalatse on the return journey, where the road to Baltistan diverges from that to Srinagar.

My poor pony was in much worse case, for the lazy, stupid syce, whose god Makhti was to be, had allowed her to get into a dreadful state from a festering wither, and had never so much as groomed her during the fortnight I was away. An artillery officer who was camping near very kindly offered to come and look at the pony next day, and under his directions the poor animal improved

quickly, but would not be fit to be saddled for a month or two; so she and her syce had to be sent back in Habibullah's charge, and I, to my sorrow, had to ride any country tat that I could find.

One afternoon the whole Christian population of Leh was asked to tea and Badminton at the Residency: we numbered nine, including the Commissioner, Captain Patterson, five being missionaries. During my absence a party of five people, three of them ladies, had arrived from Srinagar and camped in another bagh, but two of the ladies and a sahib had gone that morning up the Indus for a few days' shooting. Considering that there were only three houses in the place—the Commissioner's and two belonging to missionaries—and two camps, including my own single tent, the hospitality was overwhelming; there were invitations to breakfast, tiffin, tea, or dinner every day, and sometimes two or three in a day. There had been a great tamasha, which I was a day late for, given by the Commissioner in honour of the large party which had just come up. Lamas had come from several monasteries in the neighbourhood to dance in fancy dress and masks, and all the townspeople were present in their best clothes and ornaments.

I went for a walk one afternoon outside the town walls across the desert, and presently heard tom-tomming from a group of people a little way off the road, and went over to them to see what it meant. I had asked several people what a Tibetan funeral was like, but no one could tell me much about it, and now, behold, here was one before my eyes. Four Lamas and an acolyte dressed in curious hats and large silk tippets over their ordinary red gowns were sitting in a row on the ground, two playing brazen trumpets, one a large drum on a long handle, another a

Photographed by the Rev. H. B Marx.

LADAKHI WOMEN DANCING IN THE RESIDENCY GARDEN, LEH.

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pair of cymbals, while a fifth struck a small drum at the same time ringing a little bell. One Lama chanted sentences from a book lying before him, and the others made responses. In front of them was a round stone oven or furnace about four feet high and the same in diameter, with an opening at the bottom into which a man pushed pieces of wood he was chopping up, and on the other side of it there was a box about four feet square, with two poles for carrying it on, tied up with rope, which the bearers were just then undoing; this contained the body, which must have been in a sitting position. There were about 20 men present, but no women. The Lamas stopped their performances in a few minutes, took off their hats and tippets, and tied them up carefully in silk handkerchiefs, chatting and laughing as they did so. A piece of a cake covered with a thick layer of butter moulded into a pattern was then cut off by a Lama, who chanted as he poured chang or ghie over it out of a metal ladle exactly the same shape as the wooden ladles in ordinary use in Japan. He threw a piece of cake away on the sand, and an observant crow, which had been sitting watching the ceremony, flew to it and picked it up. This was repeated, and then a gruesome object, singed and raw-red, with what looked like distended, blackened, lidless eyes, which I could only glance at shudderingly, was cut in lumps and handed to the Lamas, who folded the pieces up in squares of cloth and tucked them away in the front of their robes. Perhaps the grisly thing was only a sheep's head after all, but it looked ghastly enough for anything. After this they got up and walked towards the town, and most of the spectators also went away, only about half a dozen men remaining. An Indian, who with his servant had like myself been watching curiously what went on, asked a man if that

was the end, but he said no, the Lamas had gone for the lumbardar; as I thought it might be a long time before they came back, I returned to the rest-house and saw the Lamas sitting about in the bazaar as I passed through. From what I was told afterwards the body must have been burnt immediately after I left, only four or five men, none of them members of the family of the dead person, remaining while that is being done. It was unlucky that I had not taken Aziz Khan with me, as he would have got to know all about the ceremony and would have explained it to me; but I had wandered out alone, not intending to go far. Dr. Shawe had only seen one entire native funeral in the six years he had been here, and his wife had only seen as much as I did, so I was fortunate, and perhaps it was as well I did not see the actual burning, especially as Tibetan women never attend funerals.

The body is entirely consumed, and one or more bones (according to the wealth or consequence of the deceased) are ground down, mixed with clay, and made into small chortens. General Cunningham says: "In the lofty districts of Rukchu (Rupshu) and Chang Thang, where no wood is procurable and where burning with the Tibetan furze would be a tedious operation, the bodies of the dead are always exposed on the hills to be eaten by vultures and wild dogs." The intense heat of the sun above and of the rocks on which the bodies are laid produce a kind of cremation. "In Great Tibet the bodies of the dead are cut into small pieces by professional corpse-butchers or pinkers and given to the dogs. . . . The bones, after being bruised in a mortar with parched corn, are made into balls and thrown to the dogs and vultures."

The photograph of a funeral on the desert, which was

Photographed by the Rev. H. B. Marx.

A Funeral in the Desert.

By the Author.

View from Gyalpo's Palace, Leh,
showing Manis and Chortens outside the Town.

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taken by the Rev. H. B. Marx, one of the Moravian missionaries stationed at Leh, shows one Lama in his robes and mitre pouring ghie over the offering which another Lama, in his ordinary dress, holds out to him on a plate. This operation was repeated at intervals about twenty times. The burning-place in this instance seems to be merely some stones roughly piled up; but the one I saw resembled a chorten in shape of a burning-place which stands by the road-side at Khalatse, only the latter is square instead of round as the one at Leh was. I was told that each family has its own burning-place, and the style of building probably varies according to the means of its possessors.

I was told a most extraordinary story by a lady I met in a hotel at Amritsar in December, 1904. She said that when she was at Simla three years before, a German who was there gave it out that he had been a Lama in Lhasa for sixteen years, and had attained to the fifth circle; he was a married man but had left his wife, and when it was discovered, on the news of her death arriving at the gompa, that he was not a celibate he was expelled from the country. He had brought a quantity of things away with him, amongst others the belt which Lamas of the fifth circle wear—a very handsome article of silver set with turquoises and with a large pendant in front; this belt goes half way round, and is hooked at each side to a large ring in a leather band which completely encircles the waist. He showed a photograph of himself in Lama dress and with his head shaved. He was continually renewing his stock of curios, and said he had an agent in Lhasa, which was perhaps an *alias* for Germany. His account of the disposal of dead Lamas was the most revolting of all: he

said that the flesh was cut off and *eaten* by the Lamas, and the bones were ground down and made into chortens. He is responsible for the story, which may or may not be true, that the skulls made into drums used in the gompas belonged to persons of either sex who had committed a breach of the seventh commandment, and were stoned to death. This man was lately at Cawnpore.

One afternoon a party of four of us rode up the very steep hill rising 1400 feet immediately above the town of Leh, with a large gompa on the very top. A little more than halfway up we got off and walked, for the path was so narrow and broken on the edge of the precipice that we none of us cared to trust ourselves even to those sure-footed hill ponies. We clambered up and up, up rough, irregular rock steps, and along narrow paths built out from the walls and jutting into space, where I had to walk with my face to the building, holding on to it and not daring to look down. Through a low narrow doorway we entered a nearly dark room in which, after our eyes had become accustomed to the gloom and a dim little lamp had been lighted, we could see frescoes of a Chinese type on the walls and ceiling, a huge statue of Buddha, seated with his head reaching through a hole in the ceiling to the outer air, and beside him figures of gods and goddesses apparently borrowed from the Hindu religion. After another steep climb we came to another gompa or temple, lighter and better kept than the other, but with the same style of decoration. In front of the Buddha the table of offerings held innumerable little brass bowls filled with ghie with some pink roses laid beside them, and a bunch of yellow ones in a dark blue vase. There were also some empty whisky bottles standing below the table, to be used

for offerings of water, no doubt, but they looked rather incongruous in such a place. The view from the top was glorious, the sky a deep blue with some fleecy clouds, lovely shadows lying in the hollows of the snow-capped mountains on the other side of the Indus; the nearer hills shading into all manner of orange, yellow, and brown tints. Immediately below was an emerald patchwork of tiny fields of every conceivable shape, outlined by their little irrigation streams, and clumps of trees dotted over them—a monument of the industry and courage of man in his struggle with Nature in her barest and most arid aspect; for wherever there was not careful cultivation there was desert, rock and sand. The tiny canals were full that day and sparkling in the sunshine, for there had been a heavy fall of rain the previous night, amounting to a quarter of an inch, which was a tremendous and most welcome downpour in a land where the united rain and snowfall is some three inches in the year. If there had been much more there would not have been a whole roof left in Leh, for the roofs here, like those in Egypt, are made of mud. The missionaries had been telling us pityingly two days before that the Skushok Bakola had collected 200 rupees as an offering for rain to come, but the rain *had* come and would make the people believe more firmly than ever in the efficacy of their religion. Probably the Skushok was weather-wise and waited till he saw signs of rain coming before he made his collection.

In coming through the bazaar one day I passed a boys' school, the scholars squatting on a veranda copying sentences out of a book on their slates, or chanting their lessons. I stopped to look at them, and their teacher, an Indian, bade them bring me some sentences in English

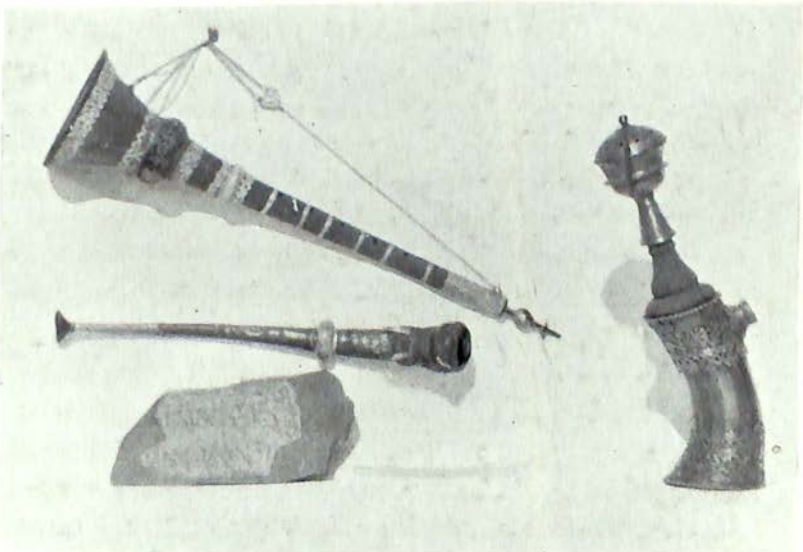
which they had written very nicely, and which they eagerly handed to me. The Moravian missionaries have about 40 children attending their school, who learn to read and write in Tibetan, Urdu, and English, and have lessons in geography, arithmetic, and, of course, the Bible. Dr. Shawe regrets that they have no one to teach them Persian, as that is a *sine qua non* for Government appointments in India and the Kashmir State.

At last I paid a visit to the principal curiosity dealer, Nazir Ali Shah, who has shops in Kashgar, Yarkand, and Lhasa, as well as here. The one in Leh is a delightful, much too fascinating place—a long room with divans running down two sides and a carved open-arched screen along the third, with wide, sunny window-places, letting in floods of light and air. On a divan Nazir Ali Shah and one or two of his friends sat solemnly smoking hookahs and looking on while an assistant brought out all sorts of things, principally from Lhasa, for the sahibs to look at. The two gentlemen who had come with me and a lady so much given to buying that it was rumoured in the bazaars that she was related to the King, lit up their cigarettes, and helped us in a leisurely way to choose sets of turquoises from some heaps in handkerchiefs on the floor, which we poked amongst as we lay on the rug, much as one might pick out small shells from a sandy beach. The greatest treasures, such as jade and agate cups, were carefully wrapped in silk and locked up in lacquer boxes with huge and complicated Chinese padlocks. Lama belts, prayer-wheels, trumpets, tea-pots, and communion services; women's dresses, cloaks, pberaks, necklaces, and chatelaines are the principal things, and very handsome as well as quaint many of them are. The Tibetan communion service consists of a small tea-

6 1 5 3 4 4 6 2

TEAPOTS, ETC., FROM LEH.

1, 2. LAMA TEAPOTS. 3. LAMA TEA-CUP. 4, 4. BUDDHIST COMMUNION SERVICE. 5. LAMA SPOON. 6, 6. MINIATURE CHORTENS OF LAMA AND KHALATSE VILLAGER.



By the Author.

TRUMPETS FROM LEH. HOOKAH FROM KHAPALLU. PRAYER-STONE FROM MANI.

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pot-shaped flagon with a handle at the side, *i.e.* halfway round from the spout; a tray for holding the wafer, and a stand for the tray in two pieces, which can be taken apart, and which are put with it in the flagon when not in use. The service shown in the photograph is made of copper ornamented with plaques of white metal.

Some pieces of silk were shown as having come from Lhasa. "Don't buy any of those," said Nazir Ali Shah; "they are made in England and sent to Lhasa to have a trade-mark put on them!"

There was one other curiosity shop in the town kept by an old man we called "the robber"; bargaining with him was apt to be prolonged for the sake of seeing him dance with excitement, while his wicked little eyes gleamed with rage over a proposed reduction of fourpence on a pound's worth of goods. He was the richest man in Leh, and seemed to own nearly all the shops in the town, for whatever one we went into in the hope of making a better bargain he was always sitting on the counter.

The Accountant-General of Kashmir, an Englishman, arrived on an official visit with two ladies in his party, and the Wazir Wazarat, the native Governor of Ladakh and Baltistan, a charming Hindu gentleman, got up a tamasha in their honour one afternoon, and asked all of us Europeans to it. At half-past three we went to a house in the bazaar where the Wazir met us, with his hands pressed to his breast, then taking ours in both of his, shook them gently while he beamed upon us, the whole population of Leh standing round and gazing in awe at the Commissioner and his scarlet-liveried servants. We were taken up a stair, and then up a ladder, to the roof of the house, on which there was a sort of pavilion, with tea spread out in it, and a row of chairs on a

balcony which we just filled, there being a dozen of us altogether. The windows and verandas opposite, and both sides of the street were full of people, and there was an orchestra of five kettle-drums and four trumpets or pipes of sorts, giving forth curious wailings and tom-tommings. The proceedings began with a game of polo, four on a side, and the great enjoyment of it by the crowd was when the ball fell into a spectator's lap or hit a musician. Next, sixteen Ladakhi ladies danced high and composedly, with much waving of arms and turning of wrists, round a row of jars of chang in the middle of the road, and after them four Lamas, with hideous demon masks and gorgeous Chinese silk robes, whirled and stamped to the music of cymbals and drums, and of two enormously long trumpets held up by two boys, while the priests played them; this was the same on a very small scale as the Himis Devil-Dance. While this was going on a tiny child about four years old began an opposition dance, whirling a stick round his head and pirouetting in precocious imitation of them. Some schoolboys did gymnastic exercises on a horizontal bar held on the shoulders of four or five men, and three other boys did sword-dances, using scimitars, two of them going through a mock duel very cleverly. When it was all over and we came down into the street, the dancing women had got to the front of the crowd, and we stopped to admire their beautiful turquoise and silver ornaments which they wear in profusion, and then we passed through a lane of salaaming and smiling onlookers. One at least of our party thought of the solemn warnings she had received from home against going into Tibet, and of the hopes expressed that she was not then in that hostile country. The only difference the Tibet Expedition made

By the Author.

A Street in Leh.

By the Author.

Tamasha in the Street at Leh, Women Dancing.

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in Ladakh was that there were fewer caravans than usual from Lhasa; and it did not seem as if the smashing of the Lhasa power would cause deep regret, for the monasteries here are strictly governed by the hierarchy there, and send heavy tribute to the Dalai Lama, and they would naturally rather keep their money to themselves. A more kindly, good-natured set of people one could not be amongst, and going along the road it is "deo-lé" or "salaam" from every man, woman, and child one meets, down to the very infants who can hardly speak plain, but put their tiny hands to their foreheads by way of salute. There are only three policemen in all Ladakh (a territory of 30,000 square miles), one being stationed in Leh, whose only functions are walking before the Commissioner on state occasions, or taking a thievish Kashmiri to the lock-up. There is no crime, or if there is by chance a murder it is usually an arranged affair to get rid of some irreclaimable "badmash." The missionaries at Khalatse told me that the father of a servant of theirs had been murdered recently, and they went to condole with the widow and family, who remarked that he really was such a bad man it was the best thing that could have happened.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME CORRESPONDENCE.

AZIZ KHAN had not heard of the Tibetan Expedition till I told him of it on the way up to Leh. He was keenly interested in the news, as he had been at one time servant to Colonel Younghusband, to whom he was devoted. He asked me to write for him to his former master offering to go to his help and take two Afghans with him, but as we were then at Lukong, a week's journey from a post-office, nothing more was said about it till we got to Leh, where he employed a bazaar letter-writer to do it for him. A Pathan is as fond of a fight as an Irishman. What was to become of me and *my* little expedition if Aziz Khan left me I did not enquire, knowing that it would be weeks if not months before he could get a reply, and that Colonel Younghusband would probably be on his way back to India by that time. The letter was shown to me, and I had just finished reading it when Habibullah approached with one in his hand and gave it to me. He is very fond of copying Aziz Khan, whom he looks upon as a great man.

"Sir,"—"Has Habibullah been writing to Colonel Younghusband too?" I exclaimed, for though a fine handsome man he has nothing of the warrior about him. "Oh

no, Miss Sahib, it is for you," replied Aziz Khan. So I read on:

"Sir,

I most humbly and respectfully beg. I hope you will kindly think of it—I am an afghan and Numbardar's son and honourable man and obedient of every Europeans. I fully thought that you are pleased on me and kind to me, and did everything earnestly which you have, and mad no loss of you, you know I mad ready all things first than all the Travellers who with you in journey. I wish that I please you very much, but unfortunately I fell from the horse and hurt very much by which you are angry with me, beside this you support me much and satisfied me, and now I became better every day. Aziz Khan told me that your intention is to send me to Srinagar Kashmir, I am sorry what I can do there. If your fully intention to send me back, please kindly fix some wage till your returning to Srinager" [which might not be till October] "I wish that I live with you and please you much and go with you to India. But what I can do—I am unfortunate—you know first I was appointed in the service of Miss ——, and on your writting I came in your shadow and got rest," [as he is 6 foot 2 and I am 5 foot nothing, my shadow cannot be of much use to him]. "I am your most obedient and you are kind to me, and you will not dismiss me I will thank you much and pray for you I do not wish to write you this letter, but you do not understand me, therefore, I have written you this letter, please show me your fully intention. Yours obedient,

HABIBULLAH KHAN,
Afaghan.

Dated 14th July, 1904.
Leh."

The next day he came again, with Aziz Khan as interpreter, to ask for a pony for the journey to Srinagar, but as the doctor had told me some days before that there was nothing in the world to prevent him walking, I declined, and as his requests had been many and various, from a watch to a waistcoat, I added that if he asked for anything more I would not employ him again. His grandfather, a century or two ago, was a Cabul man who came to Kashmir, but Kashmiri inter-marriages have taken all the grit out of the strain, and like the rest of his countrymen he is an inveterate beggar.

Here is another letter written in the bazaar acknowledging a piece of Burmese silk for a turban, which I sent to a native of Udaipur, who made arrangements for me, and looked after me while I was there:

"Dear Miss Jane E. Duncan, Udaipur, 20/3/1904.

I have had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 2nd inst. on the 19th ins.

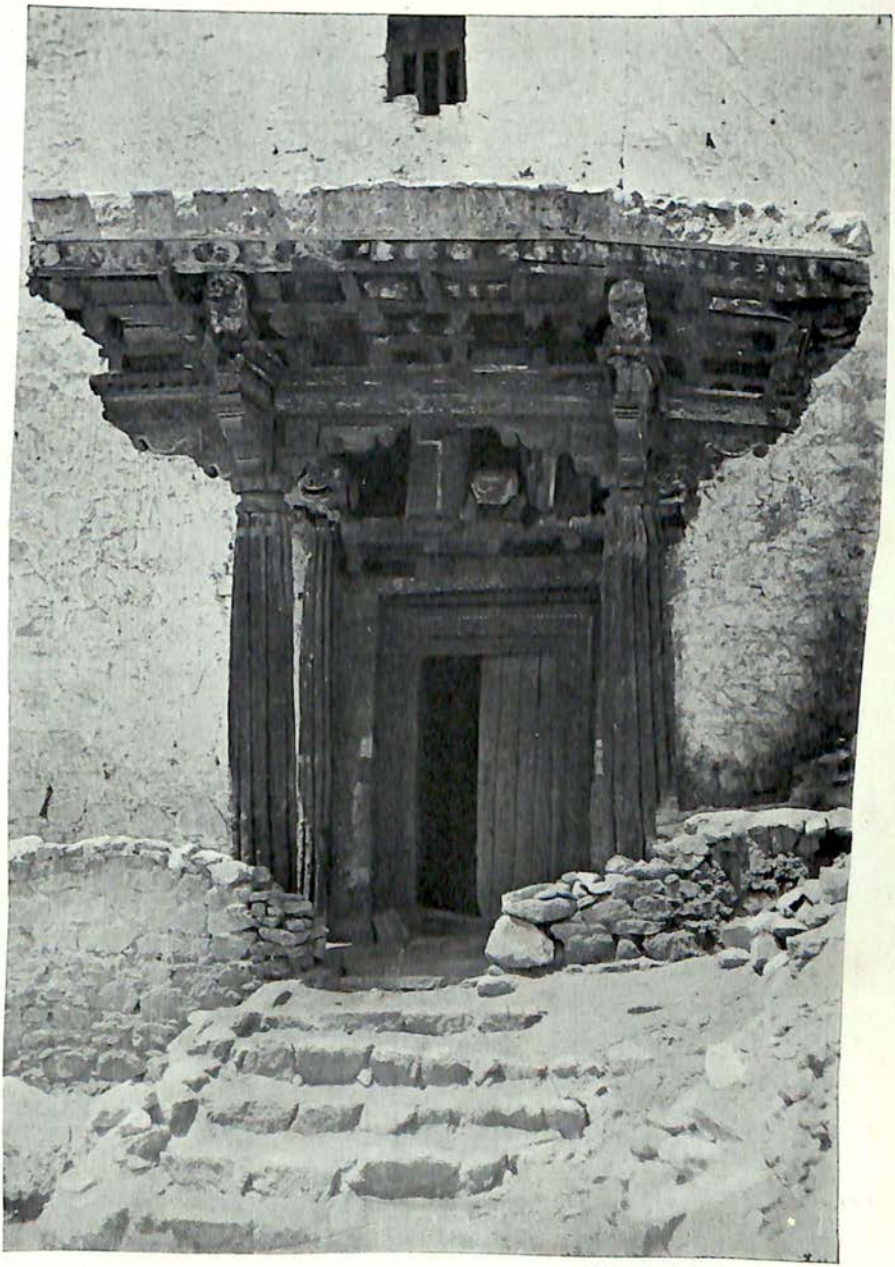
I had gone at Nimbahera so I could not write you letter soon so please excuse me. Truly sensible of the honour conferred upon me and the gratitude with which it was attended. I accept your handsome gift with many thanks and shall always prize it as the gift of friendship. I regret, however, that you should put yourself to so much expense as a present of handsome favour would have equally acceptable and I should have considered myself as much obliged. I was not able for this gratitude because I am not like your gift, as I am a poor and unworthy man. Please give my salams to Purshotemdayal who was at Udaipur with you. My companions desires their best regards to you and Purshotemdayal.

Hoping soon to have the pleasure of hearing from you. Yours very ffly, GULAMALI."

This letter in native fashion had the postage stamp where the seal should be, on the flap of the envelope, a very sensible plan for preventing it being opened in the post, which the native post office people are fond of doing.

Mr. Marx, the new Moravian missionary at Leh, went with me to see the castle of the Gyalpo or Rajah, but we were only shown the gompa, as the private apartments were locked up. The approach is under an archway from the bazaar, through narrow winding streets or lanes with ruinous walls, doors leading into emptiness, and dark cavernous openings suggestive of all manner of crime—though as a matter of fact the inhabitants are most peaceable—through what looks like an ancient city gateway, then steps and more lanes with thin mangy dogs asleep in the sun, up, up, past chortens, one of them the Rajah's own, with a tall red finial surmounted by a gilt hti or umbrella. A fearfully rough lane mounted to some equally rough steps leading to the castle door-way, which is under a porch supported on clustered wooden pillars with three huge demon heads carved in wood and painted, grinning down at the visitor. Inside there is a long, villainously paved passage to dark broken stairs, more passages and ladders with steps sloping anyhow, so that the Rajah runs an excellent chance of breaking his neck every time he goes to his gompa to say his prayers, but he only lives in this palace for about a week each year. The first room shown us was the library, shelved all round and with parcels of books wrapped up in pieces of cloth; across one end were the usual figures of Buddha and gods, with tables of offerings in front of them. There are two temples, both very dark and exactly like all the others I have seen in this country. On one wall there was a Wheel of Life, with a row of hands painted all round the rim, and a god

seated in front of it with tiers of heads diminishing in size towards the top. The ragged dirty Lama, who was our guide, gave an amusing instance of native vagueness as to numbers by telling us that there were ten thousand hands on the wheel and five hundred heads on the god, which was partly covered; but having seen similar images before I knew it had three tiers of three faces looking in different directions and two single ones above, so that eleven was the actual number, and the hands may be equally discounted; he may, however, have been speaking in a figurative sense, and meant that they represented thousands and hundreds. There were quantities of tiny chortens made of the bones of defunct Lamas on a table, and a great boxful of them underneath. I asked the Lama if I might take one, to which he smilingly agreed, and Mr. Marx took one too. I gave him eight annas backshish, and I daresay we were welcome to the whole collection at that rate. On the way down to the town my fingers began to feel sticky, and on looking at the chorten I saw something red oozing out of it, which made me feel as if the dead were protesting against being carried away in this unceremonious fashion; but I was assured that it was only some ghie that the image had been smeared with, not gore trickling out of it. I cleaned it carefully, wrapped it up in cotton wool and buried it in a cardboard box, and I hope no ghost will come to claim it. This is a funny country, though. One day I was salaamed to by a man more than 2000 years old, and he was plump and well-liking too, and did not look the antique he was believed to be. His house stands on the top of the isolated rock beside the Indus at Pitak. He was the Skushok Bakola (who collected the offering for rain), the re-incarnation of Bakola, a saint who lived about the same time as Buddha, 500 B.C., and though his body



Photographed by the Rev. H. B. Marx.

PORCH OF PALACE, LEH. MADE OF WALNUT WOOD.

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had been renewed repeatedly in the ages since then, his inward man was the same. He wore a bright red robe and a gold hat very much the shape of a cardinal's, only the crown was globular instead of flat; he had it on when he rode, but was obliged to take it off as soon as he dismounted. He passed me once as I was going to the bungalow, and when I got there he was standing at the top of the steps, one of his attendants holding the hat with a yellow silk handkerchief thrown over it. In Western Tibet Skushok means re-incarnation and is applied only to a saint, but in Chinese Tibet the word is used as a term of respect like sahib in India, and Dr. Shawe said the Lhasa people called him Skushok when they spoke to him. Cunningham says that perpetual re-incarnation was devised as late as the 15th century A.D. by Gedim Tub-pa, "the Perfect Lama," a very astute personage, as a means of gaining increased importance for the hierarchy.

Mr. Marx and his wife and another lady missionary, who had all just come to Leh from Germany, were having rather a hard time in learning languages. There are three forms of Tibetan, the classical, used in the sacred books; the honorific, used in addressing equals or superiors; and the colloquial, all of which they had to master. Many Indians and Kashmiri come to Leh, and it is necessary for the missionaries to be able to speak to them in their own tongues, so that with English and German there were often five languages being spoken in the mission-house at one time.

CHAPTER XII.

SPORT. MISSIONARY WORK.

WHEN the large party which was encamped in the other bagh left Leh they required sixty ponies, and I put off my departure till they were well ahead, or there would have been no possibility of my obtaining transport. The three who had been out shooting came back empty-handed and very sad, for they had seen a herd of forty buck antelope in the nullah, but some jungle dogs had chased them away. Two of the shooters were ladies, and lady shooters are the cause of much strong language among sportsmen in this part of the world, and in the plains indignant remarks are made about globe-trotting women shooting animals that men, living all their lives in India, had never so much as seen. If they do not kill anything they are accused of shooting wild and disturbing the game to no purpose; if they get some heads the men are furiously jealous, and say the shikari has shot them, or imposed on them in some way. But the male sex are imposed on too sometimes. A sportsman shoots at a herd, say of ibex, which are always on difficult ground; his shikari says he has killed one, and advises him to give some of the nearest villagers five or ten rupees to go and look for it. In the meantime an old head, which has been brought up for the purpose,

is steeped in water and dressed with the raw flesh of a sheep or goat, and in a few days is shown as the one found by the villagers, who, of course, have never been sent, the shikari pocketing the backshish and buying for a fraction of the sum a head as like the old one as possible from the first skinman he meets, and palming it off on the unsuspicious sahib as the trophy of his skill. Aziz Khan said he knew a Kashmir shikari who had been taking the same ibex head up country every year for six years, so that it was like a small annuity to him. Experienced sportsmen demand that the skin and meat of the animal slain shall be produced as well as the head. Horns are taken from the hla-thos by unscrupulous shikaris and palmed off upon ladies and subs and other guileless persons as the spoil of their own guns. Aziz Khan said he was going to buy two old bearskins in Srinagar when we got back there, and show them as what his Miss Sahib had shot.

At a dinner at the Residency one of the guests said he had seen hundreds of kyang near the Pangkong Lake while shooting there, and that they have the ears and tail of the ass, but have always, both males and females, brown backs and white legs; he had only once seen a foal, and though he made many enquiries of the natives, he had never been able to ascertain where the foals go. He thought it surprising that no attempt has been made to tame these creatures in a country where riding and pack animals are in such universal use. One of the two subs who were at Himis had shot two kyang of different species, and had dissected one of them, which showed all the characteristics of the horse, including a bushy tail, though some naturalists maintain that the kyang is a wild ass. Drew, in his *Jumoo and Kashmir*

Territories, says he "caught a kyang colt of fifteen days or a little more, that his coat was thick, but soft, the mane short and curly, the tail short and bushy." Dr. Sven Hedin says: "On the whole the wild ass bears the closest resemblance to the mule; in other words, he comes intermediate between the horse and the ass, but is nearer to the latter than to the former. . . . The tail resembles that of an ass, and only has hairs at its lower end. The mane, too, which is black and thick, is like that of the ass, in that it is short (about four inches long) and stands stiff and upright."[1] The evidence is conflicting, and points either to two species of kyang or to differences in the appearance of the colt and of the full-grown animal.

Since the introduction of the game-laws into Kashmir Territory the kyang have increased so much that they are eating up all the pasture in their neighbourhood, causing much hardship to the Changpas, who used to keep them down by shooting or trapping, and sometimes used them for food.

One Sunday morning I went to the Tibetan service at the mission chapel, a whitewashed room comfortably carpeted, with a large stove in the middle and a bench against the wall for Europeans, the native congregation sitting on the floor. There were twenty converts, men, women, and boys; two Mohammedan women servants at the mission-house, who as such have to attend the service, sat by themselves and took no part in it. It was very short, and began with a translation of "Ein' feste Burg" into Tibetan (sung to the familiar German tune), and finished with the Lord's prayer repeated by the congregation. About forty children attend the

[1] *Through Asia*, p. 1020.

mission-school in the winter, but most of them were then out working in the fields. There were no girls in the chapel, only boys, all the native Christians here and at Khalatse having run to sons lately, so there will be a difficulty in finding wives for them. It is unthinkable for an oriental, unless he is a yogi or holy man, to be an old bachelor, and the missionaries say that some Christian girls will have to be imported from India to prevent a relapse into polyandry; and as marriages here are a matter of arrangement this is a natural solution of the problem. Some years ago the Christian children were all girls, and when they grew up and found no husbands available, some of them ran away with down-country men, Hindus or Mohammedans, who would all be married already. It is rather risky to interfere with the customs of a people, and gives rise to unexpected developments.

It might be thought that the Roman Catholic ritual with the images, incense, vestments, lights and bells, to which the Tibetans are accustomed in their own services, would have some success among them, but there was at one time a Roman Catholic mission here which was a failure, and the last of their missionaries (if not the only one) is buried in the little cemetery near the Residency among Protestants. The following passage from the *Leh Medical Mission Report* for 1903 describes the religious ideas of the natives: "Few of the people know anything about Buddha's life or his teachings. Many of them think and say: 'We pay our priests to do our religion; what's the use of our troubling ourselves about things of which we know nothing? We are stupid; we can turn our prayer-wheels and walk round the *mani* walls and repeat the *om mani padmi hong*; the priests must do the rest.'" Though the

professed conversions are few, yet the example of Christian life led by the missionaries has a deep and lasting effect, and there is little doubt that it is at least partly owing to their influence that polyandry has almost died out in Leh, where it is the exception for a woman to have more than one husband. Here as elsewhere the Christian example is of far greater value than conversions, which are very few here, and in India at least are generally merely nominal, but in that country a "new light" party has arisen during the last twenty years among the Mahommedans, which is adopting our standards of conduct, and is correcting abuses, such as bribery amongst other things, which formerly passed unrebuked.

Mrs. Bishop, in her remarks on Christian missions at Hamadan (*Journeys in Persia*, p. 164), expresses the feeling of many travellers and residents in the East; she says that among the many benefits which result from their establishment, such as the introduction of European medicine and surgery, and the bringing them within reach of the poorest of the people, there is "the gradually ameliorating influence exercised by the exhibition of the religion of Jesus Christ in purity of life, in ceaseless benevolence, in *truthfulness* and *loyalty to engagements*, in kind and just dealing, in temperance and self-denial, and the many virtues which make up Christian discipleship, and the dissemination in the city and neighbourhood of a higher teaching on the duties of common life, illustrated by example, not in fits and starts, but through years of loving and patient labour." The influence exercised in these directions by missionaries is without doubt the most important part of their work, and is indeed invaluable, and there is no cause for despondency on their part because their professed converts are not numerous.

The Moravian mission at Leh is doing splendid work both in the hospital and on tour through the country; over a thousand patients, in-door and out-door, having been treated at the hospital annually, and many hundreds on tour. Two years ago there was a small-pox scare in Lower Ladakh, and great numbers of people came for vaccination to Dr. Shawe, who happened to be travelling through the country at the time; he used all the lymph he had with him, and heard later that the people were still carrying on the vaccinations, taking the lymph from each other's arms. The doctor adds that the Tibetans are firm believers in vaccination, and have practised inoculation for a long time.

People take immensely long journeys to the hospital to be operated on; one blind old man came forty-eight days' journey on purpose to have his cataracts removed, and a Buddhist nun, a long time ago, came from a village 80 or 90 miles away for the same purpose, and was so well satisfied that she sent two of her relations for treatment, and from that time never a year has passed without one or more patients coming from that valley, where cataract seems to be particularly common. In the Leh *Mission Report* for 1904 it is remarked: "The operations of the Lhasa expedition practically did not affect us at all—indeed the district where they took place is nearly a thousand miles away. It becomes abundantly evident, however, that it is not the *people* of Tibet who are especially anxious to keep out foreigners. Time and again people from Chinese Tibet have said to us: 'If the British enter Lhasa, then you will be able to come over the border with your medicines. There are so many blind and sick people whom you might help.' Indeed we have several times during late years been urged to cross the

border in any case, the people assuring us that the guards would never interfere with a European who brought medicines and could open blind eyes. But as long as we are too short-handed to make tours in Ladakh, there is no hope of getting so far afield, even if permitted. That the Lamas of Ladakh and the surrounding districts have no special objection to coming to us for treatment is shown by the fact that, out of our 43 in-patients, at least six were Lamas, most of whom were friendly and talkative enough whilst in hospital."

CHAPTER XIII.

RETURNING DOWN THE INDUS VALLEY.

I HAD many consultations with Aziz Khan as to the best route to take in returning to the Valley of Kashmir, which I did not wish to do till the middle of September, when the rains end and the mosquitoes have disappeared. He was very urgent that I should go to Skardo in Baltistan, and cross the Deosai Plains to Burzil Chowki on the Gilgit Road, and so down to Bandipura in the valley. This I in the end decided to do, although another of the Resident's guests at the dinner before-mentioned, on hearing that I was going to Skardo over the Chorbat La (16,700 feet), gave a most dismal account of the roads, and remarked that he would not say it *would* be the death of me, but that it might; that he crossed the pass three years ago in July, when the ponies sank up to the girths in snow and had to be dug out; that there is a nussick raft or zak (made of sticks on inflated goat-skins) to cross the Indus on, and the boatmen had to breathe into the skins as the zak went along, and if they did not breathe properly away the raft would be swept down by the current to destruction; and that I should have to gallop for miles on the Gilgit Road along the face of a precipice, with a sheer drop of 1000 feet below me, so if the pony stumbled I should be dead.

This Job's comforter was of opinion that Baltistan was a country to be seen—through the window of a Pullman car, but that the idea of undergoing any hardships for it was preposterous, and he said that if he was ever restored to civilisation he would never go beyond the reach of the electric light. I had grown very wary as to how I credited fearsome histories of what was before me, and on making further enquiry I discovered that the author of these had crossed the Chorbat La in a year when there was an unusually large amount of snow, whereas in this, 1904, there was unusually little; that my route *viâ* Shigar did not cross the Indus, and the nussick raft would not have to be used; and, finally, that I should not go near the part of the Gilgit Road where I was to be killed, so all these bogeys were disposed of. Another man said, "Oh, as you have done the Chang La there is nothing left"; but that was an exaggeration in the opposite direction, for there are many more difficult and dangerous passes, though few higher, and the ability to bear the great altitude is a mere matter of constitution.

On the 19th of July I left Leh on my way back to Khalatse (where the road into Baltistan, *viâ* the Chorbat La, diverges from that to Srinagar), and camped at the picturesque village of Bazgo, which I had merely passed through before: here I climbed, on hands and knees part of the way, to the top of a very steep crag behind the village, to look at a gompa, then closed and empty, and a ruined fortress which crowned it. The fortress must have been an immense building, capable of receiving the entire population of the valley in times of trouble, for it consists of square and round towers on several spurs which jut out from the hill-side, and are connected by

massive double curtain walls running along the tops of the knife-like ridges which extend from one tower to another. The narrow path winds steeply up among rocks worn into the most fantastic forms imaginable, looking in one part like an enchanted castle with its guardian goblins and demons turned into stone. The cliffs in some of the valleys are worn by the weather into the likeness of hideous grinning faces, with horns and huge protruding eyes and teeth, from which the Lamas must surely have copied their masks. The houses, too, look as if they had been built in imitation of the thick walls, and round and square towers into which the surrounding hills are worn so exactly that it is often almost impossible to tell which is man's handiwork and which is Nature's. Very often it is both, for in many cases advantage has been taken of the crannies and shelves on the face of a precipice to make, by means of putting in a bit of wall here or a scaffolding across a crevice there, a rocky dwelling-place which must have been almost impregnable when in good repair, for the puzzle is to know how the inhabitants found access to it from the valley below. This kind of habitation has been abandoned owing to the peace and security, the freedom from raids and invasions by petty neighbouring rajahs on each other, which the country has enjoyed for half a century under the Maharajah's rule. But even the ordinary houses are not easily distinguishable from their surroundings, for walls, rocks, and hillsides match exactly in colour, unburnt bricks and huge, thick slabs of sun-dried clay being placed on a foundation of rough stones and boulders, both in old and modern buildings.

At Saspola, my next camping-place, where I arrived on the 21st of July, vegetation had advanced greatly

since I passed through on the 15th of June. The barley was now white to the harvest, though this valley is fully 10,000 feet above the sea; but the heat in summer is very great, as the sun is nearly vertical and the air is very rare at this height. In Australia men can do field-work wearing only a tweed cap on their heads, with the thermometer at 140° or 150° in the sun; but in this country it is only safe for Europeans to do without a pith helmet for two or three months in the middle of winter.

From Saspola to Nurla was only eleven miles, but I had such a slow pony that in spite of whipping and expostulation it did scarcely nine miles in three and a half hours, so, in despair, Aziz Khan rode on in front and towed it along with its nose buried in his pony's tail. The path, barely four feet wide, wound up and down along the face of a perpendicular cliff, with the clay-coloured Indus rushing and roaring at the foot. Rocks jutted out here and there over it, and were hollowed to admit of the load of a pack-pony passing under them, but a rider had to stoop, or be knocked off. At one place the river was lapping over the path for a couple of yards, and in wading through it one did not know what hole one might get into, as the water was too muddy to see through. One of the pack-ponies fell here, but was luckily rescued with very little damage to itself or its load. If it had got fairly into the current it would have been swept away and never seen again. My pony, which had an English saddle and bridle on for the first time, and had not the faintest idea what laying the reins on the side of its neck meant, would walk like all of its kind on the extreme outer edge of the path, sending pebbles rolling down the precipice from

under its feet, while it went slithering down sandy steeps or scrambled up over rocks, as it was dragged along much too hastily for its own taste. I grew hungry, as people do sometimes in rather exciting circumstances, and was in the act of eating a scone, at the same time holding up my umbrella and the reins with one hand, when we got into a very difficult place; but as going hungry into the next world or remaining with sunstroke in this world would not have improved matters, I finished the scone and clung to the sunshade, thinking that if the beast did go over with me it would be merely a moment of panic, a sudden shock, and that would be all; but in spite of these philosophical reflections I pulled my hardest to get it a few inches away from the edge, and sometimes almost succeeded. At last we reached a wide plain, where I drew out the bottle of milk which I always carried in my saddle-bag, and found it a good deal warmer than tepid, but quite sweet. It had been partly cooked by the heat of the sun, and it was not uncommon to find it churned into butter after a jolting ride.

The first part of the road from Saspola to Khalatse, utterly lonely at other times, was that day quite lively with naïb tehsildars (assistant district magistrates), chuprassis, and other functionaries trotting past at intervals, intent on making arrangements for Prince Louis of Orléans on his way to Leh, and thence to Russia. After them came a string of pack-ponies and a number of coolies, and lastly the Prince and two attendants. After that the way was as solitary as before.

There is no good camping-ground at Khalatse, and I put up at the dak bungalow, which is high above the river with a veranda looking down on terraced fields,

where masses of pink roses were in bloom when I was here before. The barley harvest was now going on (the wheat was still quite green), the crop being pulled up by the roots, and the field ploughed and re-sown at once with buck-wheat or vegetables, which have time to ripen before the winter. It is very remarkable that two crops can be obtained in a season at a height of 10,000 feet. Two men and two women began to clear a small field one morning, and by seven o'clock next morning it had been ploughed and sown again, and its irrigation channels dotted with stones to obstruct the water and send it over the ground.

The walnut trees here are magnificent, and many of them of great age, but the nuts would not be ripe for another month. The fruit in the numerous apricot orchards was nearly ripe. When picked it is spread out on house-tops and rocks to dry. It is one of the principal food-stuffs of the country, and is a most valuable article of commerce. The inhabitants of Lower Ladakh and Baltistan take it in great quantities to the neighbourhood of the salt-beds near the Chinese frontier, where no fruit or vegetables grow, and exchange it for salt with the nomad tribes. The salt is carried down to Leh and sold for money, which pays the Maharajah's taxes, payment in kind not being accepted for them. It is a most laborious way of obtaining coin, to have to travel for months through arid valleys and over mountain passes, where the ways are of the roughest, stopping on the road to pasture the ponies and donkeys wherever there happens to be a patch of verdure; but the women do the field work, except for a day or two in harvest, and the men spend their whole time as carriers, either for themselves or for the sahibs who come for shooting, and

who are extremely welcome on account of the money they bring into the country.

A dog belonging to the missionaries gave me a joyful welcome when I arrived at the dak bungalow, and took up its abode with me for the whole of my stay. It was half European, half Tibetan, but was extremely fond of European people and hated the natives. It is curious how animals discriminate, for on the other hand Tibetan dogs are very suspicious of us. Aziz Khan bought two puppies, five and three months old, at Lukong to take home to Kashmir as watch-dogs, and it was weeks before they would take food out of my hand, while if I attempted to stroke them they snapped and ran away. It was like trying to tame birds. Batta, the bigger of the two, was like a heavily-built Scotch collie, black with a little tan on the face and legs, and white underneath like a rabbit's, his thick bushy tail curling over his back. His mother was as large as a donkey, and he had grown to be a very powerful animal at nine months old when I last saw him. The other one was slighter, and did not give promise of growing nearly so big. She was sent home from Khalatse, and after that Batta became very friendly with me. These dogs are used as sheep-dogs and watch-dogs in the gompas and farmhouses in Ladakh. They seem to be of the same breed as those which come down with the mule caravans to Bhamo on the Irrawaddy from the Shan States, and are noted for their ferocity. The owners, both Ladakhis and Shans, sit on their heads if they are not tied up when any Europeans pass them. All over Kashmir Territory it was very noticeable how delighted European dogs were to see white people, and how frightened the natives were when they came near, squatting on the ground to

cover their bare legs with their coats and avoid being bitten.

A party of pilgrims, Yarkandi people on their way to Mecca, camped in the village; they were comfortably clothed men, riding good ponies, but those who come back are often a sorry spectacle on their return from their immense journey. Some of them die in or near Mecca, and others are so ill by the time they get back to Leh that they have to go into hospital there, their clothes are in rags and their ponies dead; but Mussulmans carry into practice the Christian theory that this life is merely a passage to the next world, and they believe that losing it in a pious or patriotic cause ensures immediate entry into Paradise. It is four hundred miles from Leh to Yarkand over six high passes, some of them very bad, and over dreadful roads, so the fatigue and hardships suffered by the pilgrims are severe on that part of their travels. In the following summer Leh was crowded with Turki pilgrims returning from Mecca, many who went from Kuchar, Imfan, etc. by way of Constantinople going back by this road, in consequence probably of the Russo-Japanese war. It was expected that 1000 or so would pass through Leh. Many had died on the road, and many more were quite destitute when they arrived there.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FORT OF BALU-MKHAR, KHALATSE.

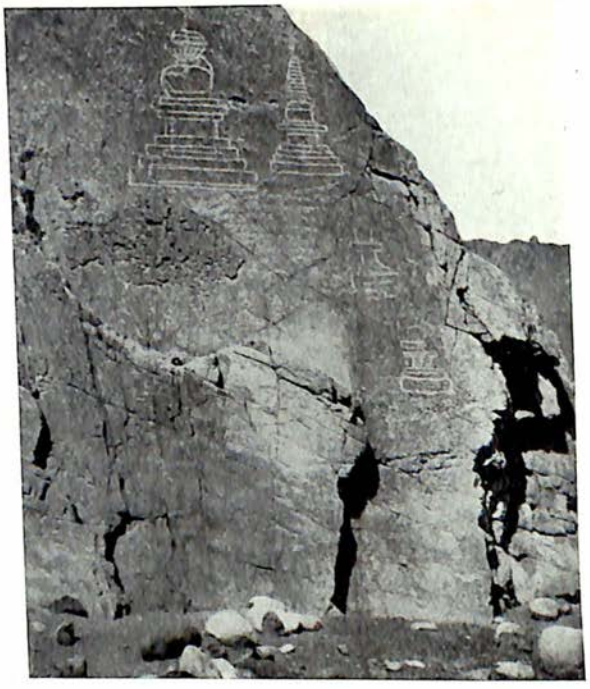
I HAD heard that the Rev. A. H. Francke, the Moravian missionary at Khalatse, was an authority on Tibetan subjects, so I called on him immediately, as I was thirsting for information about many things I had seen and heard on my journey of which I could get no explanation, and to my joy found that I had come to the right quarter to have my craving satisfied. It was extremely tantalising to discover what a number of interesting places I had passed in ignorance of their existence, for want of someone to point them out. Mr. Francke kindly acted as my guide on several occasions and began by taking me to see the old castle of Khalatse, perched on a very high peak a little way from the village. After a long and stiff climb the track became so bad, across a very steep incline of crumbling shale, that I could not face it. The next morning we made an early start, and by a roundabout way were successful in reaching and entering the ruin, which consists of the usual collection of small rooms, built on different levels as the surface of the rock demands. There were no relics of antiquity to be seen in them, but no doubt, if they were cleared out, many interesting objects would be found. A visit to the Fort of Balu-mkhar, about three miles up the Indus on the

Leh road, was much more successful. It stands on a rock, precipitous on all sides, which rises on the very edge of the right bank of the river.[1] The road from Kashmir to Leh passes it at a distance of about 200 yards, across a sandy plain; but the building and the rock match so exactly in colour, and are alike so rugged in outline, that many travellers pass it unobserved, particularly as the cliffs in this part of Ladakh often assume the appearance of houses, forts, and ramparts so closely, that it sometimes requires careful inspection to ascertain whether they are natural formations or not.

High up on the rock of Balu-mkhar, so high as to be undecipherable by the naked eye, there are four inscriptions with two large chortens above them, and a group of smaller ones beside and below them, all engraved in deeply incised lines on a smooth face of a cliff. Mr. Francke had long wished to read these inscriptions, but had been unable to do so for want of a field-glass; fortunately I was provided with one, and by means of it the munshi Yeshes Rigdzin, who accompanied us in our explorations, was enabled to read and copy them, and they proved to be of very considerable antiquarian interest. The Munshi's copies and drawings from the carvings, with Mr. Francke's translations and comments are given here.

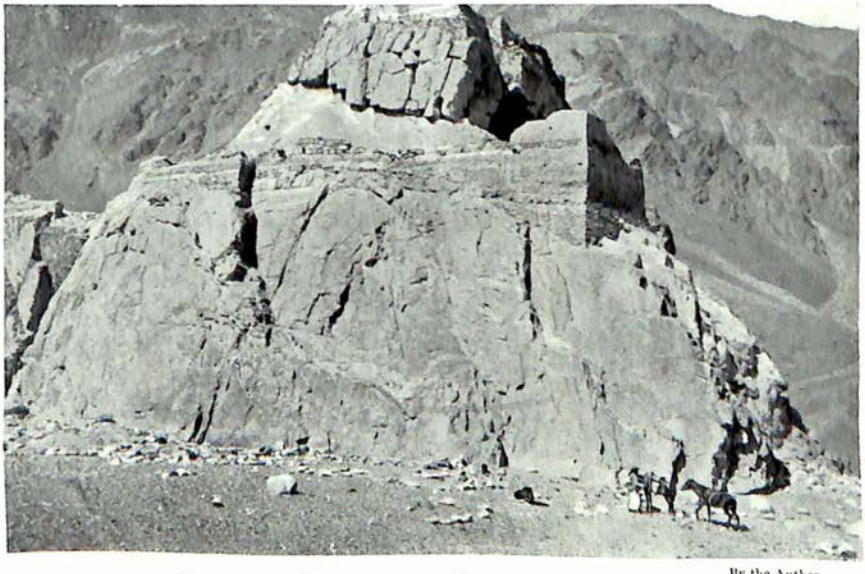
In his "Notes on the English Translation of Inscription No. III." Mr. Francke says: "Although the inscription is without a date it is of a certain historical value. We learn from it that at the time of the inscription the fort was under Lamayuru; probably the income at the custom-

[1] The full orthography of the name is probably *sBalu-mkhar*, signifying the "dwarf fort," from its construction on a comparatively low rock, contrary to the usual rule in Ladakh, where such buildings are generally placed on the top of high and almost inaccessible hills for the sake of security.



INSCRIPTIONS AT BALU-MKHAR FORT.

By the Author

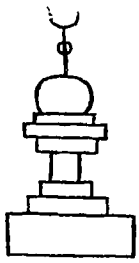


BALU-MKHAR FORT, SHOWING POSITION OF INSCRIPTIONS (ON THE ROCK ABOVE THE PONIES).

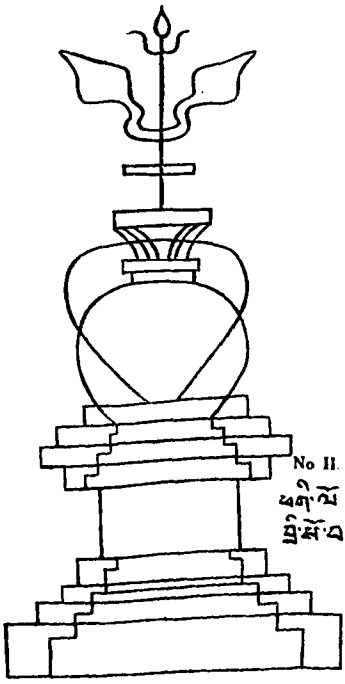
By the Author

To face page 140.

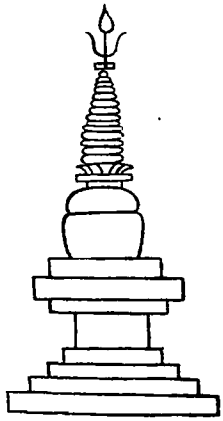
ROCK CARVINGS AT BALU-MKHAR



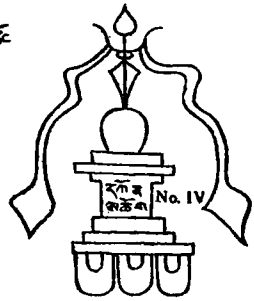
No. I.



No II.



No III.



YESHES RIGDZIN, DEL

No. I. In the pig-year this cenotaph was erected.

No. II. Written in the pig-year.

No. III.

[This cenotaph] was erected by Stag-ythsar-rlabs-cen himself, who is the chief son of Khri-shong-[srong?] 'abum-rdugs, the master of the trade in the Lower Valley, born in the middle part of [the village of] mThing-brang. [This is] a good picture [of the cenotaph]. It was carved as a hand-print on this lasting and unchangeable fort which belongs [to the village of] Yung drung.[1]

No. IV. God, *lit.* the rarest and highest [being].

[1] Lamayuru.

house went there, but whether a petty king or the monastery was the principal power at Lamayuru we cannot decide for certain, although the latter is the more probable. The inscription seems to date from the time when, according to the *Ladvags rgyal rabs*, Lower Ladâkh was divided into a great number of petty kingdoms, that is, at the very beginning of Ladâkhî historiography, otherwise the fort would have been under Leh.

"The words *ythsar*, *bthsan*, and *myi*, which remind us of the Endere relics,[1] without doubt 1200 years old, also speak in favour of a very high antiquity of the inscription.

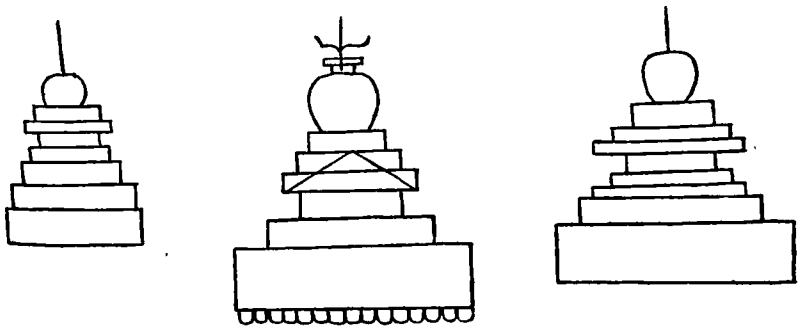
"Like the Endere relics, the Balu-mkhar inscription is written in the *dbu-can* character and is probably later than the inscriptions in ancient *dbu-med* character, which are found round about the ruined fort near Saspola bridge,[2] but the Endere relics make it probable that the Tibetan art of writing is very much older than is stated in the historical records of Tibet.

"We see from the inscriptions that at the very dawn of Ladâkhî historiography a lively trade was in existence in Lower Ladâkh, which made it worth while to post a custom-house officer with the title mDo-ytsong-ytso at Balu-mkhar. The articles found on this spot seem to prove that as at the present day the trade between India and Yârkand was carried on through Ladâkh. The fort guarded an ancient rope bridge across the Indus, the last fragments of the piers of which can still be seen. The tax was apparently levied in kind, *i.e.* in tea, beads, and perhaps cowries, because while not a single coin has as yet been

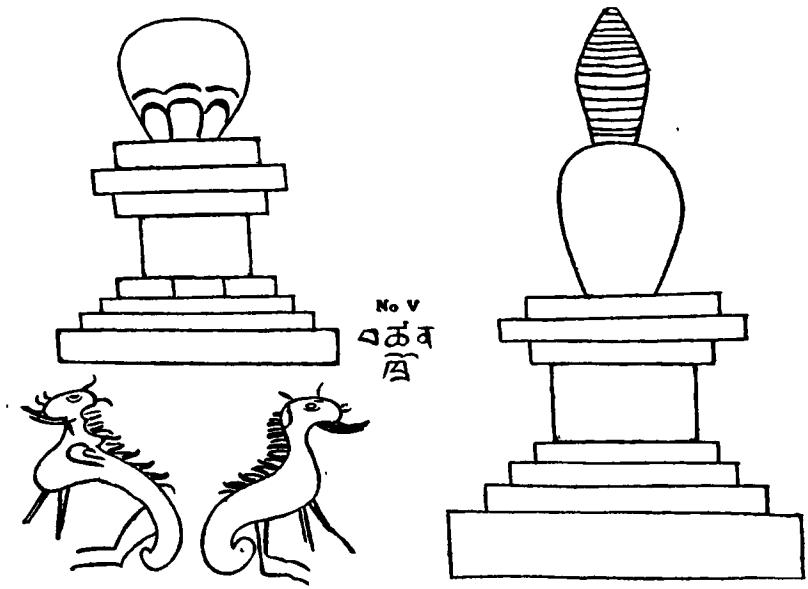
[1] Discovered by Dr. Stein.

[2] A few of the ancient inscriptions near Saspola bridge were reproduced in the *Indian Antiquary*, for September, 1903, in a paper on "Some more rock-carvings from Lower Ladakh."

ROCK CARVINGS AT BALU-MKHAR



From the Upper Terrace.



VISHEE MOOZIN, DEL. From a Cave, a quarter of a mile from the Fort

No. V.

Strong anger [the name of a guardian deity].

found in the fort, some of those articles have. The goods were probably carried across the bridge by men, the baggage animals having to swim through the river, being dragged across with ropes. But it is not impossible that the merchants had to change horses at every stage, and that a fresh supply was kept waiting for them on the other bank of the river.

"There is still another reminiscence of the ancient custom-house in the neighbourhood. It is the name of a pass close to the fort on the north side, which is still called Shogam-la, the Customs pass. Across this pass lay the ancient trade route before the present road along the Indus had been cleared by the blasting of many rocks. The ancient road first took the traders to mThingmo-gang, thence to Hemis shugpacan and thence to Sikir. After Sikir the present road by Basgo and Nyemo to Leh is reached.

"From the inscription we also learn that the masters of the country bore Tibetan Buddhist names which do not now occur, and knew Tibetan. This must, however, not induce us to believe that Lower Ladâkh as a whole was Tibetan and Lamaist in those days. From other sources we know almost for certain that the greater part of the population of the time spoke the Dard dialects."

The bridge which Balu-mkhar guarded was made, tradition says, no doubt quite correctly, of willow ropes, bridges of that description being formerly universal in the Himalayas over large streams, though now being gradually superseded on frequented routes by wooden ones, to the great relief of all European and many native travellers to whom passing across them is a terror. The willow bridge shown in the photograph is at Garhi in the Jhelum valley, near the road from Rawal Pindi to Srinagar, and is so strongly made that it can support as many as five or six

By the Author.

ROPE BRIDGE, GARHI.

By the Author.

KHALATSE CASTLE, LADAKH.

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people at once. Needless to say this bridge has not to be used by visitors to Kashmir or there would be small occasion for hotels in the "Happy Valley." In arranging my routes with Aziz Khan I made it a strict condition that he was not to take me where there were willow bridges to cross.

The Garhi bridge is made of three ropes, one three or four feet below the others, suspended from posts on the banks, the passenger walking forward on the lower one, and grasping the upper ones but not leaning too heavily on them on peril of tipping over and falling into the river. In a strong wind or when the water is so high that the lower rope dips in the swift-flowing river, the passage is dangerous even to natives who are quite accustomed to it. Ponies, cattle, sheep, and goats have their four feet tied together, are slung upside down on a rope stretching from bank to bank, and drawn across by another rope tied round their necks, the natives gravely asserting that they understand it and do not mind it. A sahib told me that some goats belonging to him suffered so much from this usage that they were of little or no use afterwards.

Another kind of bridge has only one rope, from which a basket or a board four feet square is suspended by a cord from each corner, the passenger drawing himself across, or being drawn by someone standing on the bank. On a third type of bridge I have seen a man cross with extraordinary contortions, as he sat in a loop of rope which flew up and down while he dragged himself along by grasping the cord above him hand over hand. Quite an easy bridge exists at Chakoti, in the Jhelum Valley, with a hand-rail on each side and a foot-way suspended from them by ropes, the whole made of well-twisted willow twigs: this is the kind that used to exist at Balu-mkhar.

These bridges were often fortified; at Saspola there are the remains of a castle which formerly guarded one.

The side of the rock of Balu-mkhar next the river is naturally divided into four terraces rising one above the other, and on these there are remains of masonry which tradition says are a part of the staircase formerly leading down to the bridge from the fort. (It may be well to mention here that in the absence of documentary evidence, much reliance may safely be placed on tradition among the Tibetans, who have a strong historic sense.) Unless the entrance to the fort on the landward side was very different when it was inhabited from what it is now, it must have been extremely hard work for laden coolies to gain access to the bridge; the only means of getting inside the building (which apparently everyone had to pass through before crossing the river) being up a precipitous fissure in the rock, about three feet wide, with a boulder here and there by way of a step, but far too steep ever to have made even a tolerable staircase. The Tibetans, however, can make their way quite easily up and along places which are only fit for a cat or a goat, according to European ideas, and they have inherited their skill from innumerable generations of climbing ancestors.

The interior of the fort consists of single stories of many small rooms on the different levels of the rock, built of uncut boulders for the most part, plastered with mud in the ordinary manner of the country, though in the building just above the inscription squared stones have been used. In one of these rooms a stone anvil was found, bearing many traces of iron having been used on it which had left a very marked deposit, and pieces of charcoal and iron slag were lying near it. In the living

rock a splendid specimen of the Ladakhi stone mortar was discovered. On the top story carvings of chortens are incised on the rock inside the walls. The munshi told us that the villagers of Khalatse have long made a habit of searching in and around the fort for iron arrow-heads, which they melt down to make into implements, as iron is extremely scarce and valuable in Western Tibet, so scarce that none of the ponies are shod. Beads are also found, which the natives value highly and are unwilling to part with, but a villager sold us two. One is a beautiful one made of a light brown and white agate, highly polished, barrel-shaped, three-quarters of an inch long, slightly thicker at one end than the other, and with both ends slanted a little so as to fit perfectly into the round of a necklace; the other bead is of black wood, roughly cut, and worn smooth with age and use.

The ascent into the interior of the fort being only just possible for a European man, I occupied myself, while Mr. Francke and the munshi were making their inspection in it, in searching among the stones at the foot of the rock for relics of antiquity, and was fortunate in finding some potsherds, which seemed to belong to large vessels similar in shape to those at present in use in the country. Several of the pieces had a pattern in blood-red on a yellow ground. Modern Ladakhi pottery is never ornamented in this way, but in an ancient grave (presumably of Dards who died during the old Dard colonisation), opened at Leh in January of this year (1904), by Mr. Francke and Dr. Shawe, some whole *dzamas* or jars were found with the same colouring as on these fragments. Dr. Shawe sent me a photograph of two of them (p. 148), and the following description: "The jugs are 4½ inches high, and about the same

in diameter at the thickest part. Mouth 3 inches across. They are of clay of a drab-colour (when burnt), the pattern being painted in dark red. The same pattern is on both, though it only comes out well on one in the photo. Besides these there were similar clay vessels of all sizes up to 18 inches diameter, along with the above in the grave." Entire skeletons were found in this grave, which showed it to belong to a period anterior to the conversion of Ladakh to Lamaism by the Tibetans, because under that rite the dead are burned, not buried. To this period presumably the fragments found in the fort belonged also.

Another find was numerous pieces of granite mortars such as are used at the present day for grinding pepper, and for grinding walnuts and apricot kernels for oil, also for pounding dried apricots to be used in the form of cakes; similar implements are to be found at the present day in all cottages in Ladakh and Baltistan. Apricot oil extracted from the kernels is used for lighting in tiny stone lamps and small cups, with a piece of wick floating in it, as is walnut oil, which, however, is more expensive, and both are used for the hair.

According to tradition the Balu-mkhar mortars were also used for grinding wheat and barley for flour, as at the time of the occupation of the fort water-mills for this purpose were not in use.

The munshi found a very perfect stone axe-head, triangular in shape, four inches long, with a well-made round hole for the handle. Other articles picked up were a piece of stone with a carving of the shaft of a chorten, and some smooth oblong stones, possibly water-worn, used for pestles, for sharpening arrow-heads, and for throwing from slings. As the stone-age still flourishes in Western

Photographed by the Rev. Dr. Shawe.

TWO ANCIENT JARS FOUND AT LEH.

By the Author.

GRANITE MORTARS FOUND AT BALU-MKHAR.

To face page 148.

Tibet, and, indeed, is likely to do for a long time, the use of these implements is not a mere matter of conjecture.

While turning over stones and poking in the sand I was much struck with the complete absence of insect life. Not a living thing of any description could be seen among them, owing, no doubt, to the intense heat in summer and cold in winter, combined with the extreme dryness of the climate at all seasons.

It was near noon when we finished our search, and as the study of archaeology on a sandy desert innocent of a single blade of green, with the thermometer at 150°, is thirsty work, we had brought a tea-basket; but the problem was where to find a level place in the shade—a problem that refused to be solved, so we finally perched ourselves out of the glare of the sun on the most accessible steps of the ruined staircase, the feet of one *convive* being higher up than the head of the other. The tea-basket was jammed firmly against the rock with the teapot inside, the spirit-lamp balanced itself precariously on two stones, two or three places were found sufficiently flat to hold a cup or a plate very much on the slope, and one of the servants had to be called up to stand with one foot on one step and the other on a lower one, holding as many things as his two hands would contain. Someone coughed or spoke, and away shot a plate; a roll followed, which was snapped up by two observant dogs, but when the butter tin bounded down to within an inch of their noses, and they took it as a kind attention on our part, shrieks and yells were hurled at them to give them a hint of their mistake and keep them off till the living sideboard could be relieved of his burden and sent to the rescue.

After this combined excitement and refreshment we went to examine some ancient chortens on the other side

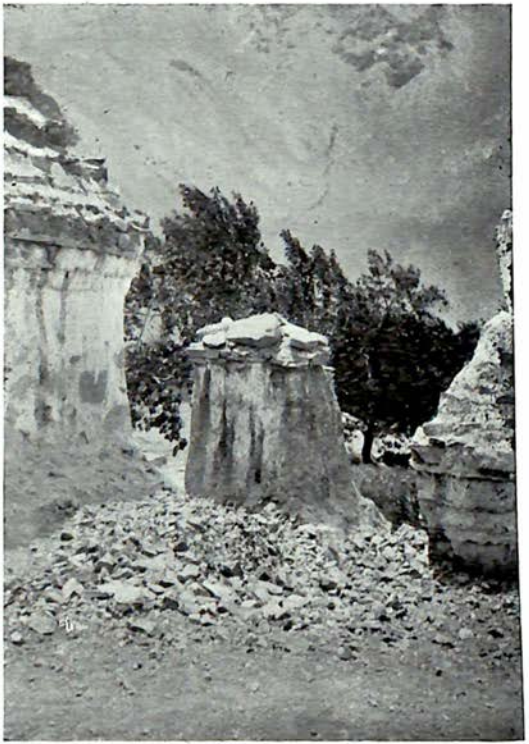
of the road, and in crossing the desert the munshi called our attention to a little square of stones in the sand, which Khalatse tradition says are the remains of the throne on which the high Lama sat while on tour through the district, and that the soldiers of the garrison stationed in the fort came to him there for benediction. It is said that the chortens are the burial-place of officers of the garrison. There is no trace of any village near them that they could have belonged to. On a road which starts a very short distance away from the chortens and leads to Teya (a village three hours off up a side nullah), there is an ancient mani which is believed to have been also built by the garrison.

On three subsequent visits to Balu-mkhar Mr. Francke found many interesting relics, not the least so being those which bear witness to a great change in the climate, such as stones of the stalkless wild cherry of Ladakh, of the wild plum, and of the peach, these trees having now almost entirely disappeared from the country.[1] A quantity of the charcoal and wood of the pencil cedar lying ready for burning beside an old hearth proves that at the date when the fort was occupied, say 600 years ago, this wood must have been common and easily procurable in the neighbourhood of Khalatse, as it no doubt once was in every Ladakhi valley, though it has now disappeared from the eastern portion of the country and only thrives west of Kargil. From roots found here and there it is known that the tree at some remote period existed round Leh, though there is not a single one to be found there now, and all attempts to grow young trees, even some marches west of that town

[1] The Dards, according to their own tradition, introduced fruit-trees into Ladakh when they founded colonies there from Gilgit, where fruit is very abundant.

By the Author.

RUINED STÛPA, OR CHORTEN, NEAR BALU-MKHAR; ACCORDING TO TRADITION BURIAL-PLACE OF OFFICERS OF THE GARRISON.



By the Author.

CHORTEN IN THE FORM OF A BURNING PLACE, KHALATSE.

To face page 150.

at Himis-shugpacan where there is the "holy grove," consisting of fifty trees, have failed, so that it too will soon disappear. All these facts tend to show that the climate of Ladakh is gradually losing the moisture it once possessed.

The results of this hasty and superficial examination at Balu-mkhar show what a rich field there is for thorough exploration in the forts dotted about in the valleys of Ladakh, of which it is a type. In November, 1905, Mr. Francke wrote as follows: "Lately we have been making wonderful discoveries here. Two inscriptions in non-Tibetan characters from Leh and Khalatse were examined by Dr. Vogel of Lahore, and declared to be, one Indian Brahmin of the first century A.D., and the other Karoshthi. Besides these we have discovered many ancient Tibetan inscriptions dating from c. 950 A.D. to 1000 A.D." These finds are no doubt merely the first-fruits of a harvest that may be gathered in the near future in this little-known region, which is now only beginning to excite the attention of European archaeologists.

CHAPTER XV.

TIBETAN MUSIC AND POETRY.

I AM indebted to Mr. Francke for permission to give the accompanying specimens of Tibetan music[1] and poetry from the large collections he has made. He wrote down and harmonised a great many airs sung by the Ladakhis (using two as hymn tunes at the mission services) and their number and variety show the absurdity of the phrase, "The only tune known in the East," which one frequently hears. They appeared in an article on Tibetan music, with many specimens, contributed by him to the *Journal of the German Oriental Society.* In 1905 he was engaged on a similar article for the French *Dictionnaire du Conservatoire.*

He has translated the *Saga of Kesar*, besides a collection of religious, court, wedding, hunting, dance, fairy-tale, polo, harvest, love, and drinking songs, sung by the Ladakhis. He remarks that drinking songs, which are in use at weddings and feasts, are of a very different character from those we should call by that name; they may indeed be called catechisms of the pre-Buddhist religion. The court poetry has no rhyme, but a certain rule of metre is strictly observed, and the language is as nearly as possible that of books; dance songs are in the dialect of the country where they are sung, and have rhyme of sentence or parallelism, and generally also

[1] Page 161.

a metre, which is not so strictly uniform as in the court songs. In the A.B.C. song (given below) the first letters of every line are arranged according to the order of the Tibetan alphabet; in another the first letters show the alphabet in inverted order. The notes are Mr. Francke's.

THE A.B.C. SONG.

1. The disposition of the teacher's soul
2. Is clean like snow, his transient body
3. Is beautiful, wherever you look at it.
4. This my own soul,
5. Though it agrees with religion as regards speech,
6. May my behaviour also agree with my mind!
7. When bringing the offerings of tea and beer,
8. Give that I may take care of my soul!
9. When the clear light of the Dalai Lama's spirit
10. Finally touches the soul,
11. All that at present I perceive in my soul,
12. Illness, old age, death become nothing.
13. The great and powerful *Sakya*
14. Is the hinderer of misery in the other world.
15. Do not sleep like an ox;
16. Unchangingly, watch your soul!
17. (Fine) like a little artery or pore of perspiration
18. Is the doctrine of the famous Lama.
19. Friend! Also your own soul
20. Keep in clearness!
21. When the Lama, to whom I stick, as to my cap,
22. Brings a spotless offering,
23. Oh, to have this sight (perception)
24. Is a wonderful spectacle for the soul!
25. Oh, mankind, with hearts like the wind!
26. Oh, thou hero, who subduest even a pass-storm,
27. Teach and at the same time explain (thy teaching)!
28. Fulfil quickly the path of perfection,
29. The self-salvation of *sPyanras gzigs*![1]
30. Oh, mother *rDorje Phagmo*,[2]
31. Oh, great mother, thou and I,
32. May we, without any separation, always remain united!

[1] The *Boddhisatva's* name means "Sees with a clear eye."

[2] The mother's name means "Sow thunderbolt."

In another vein is the song called

THE TIBETAN FIDDLE.

Do not think that my fiddle, called *bkrashis dbang rgyal*,[1]
Does not possess a great father!
If the divine wood of the pencil cedar
Is not its great father, what else?

Do not think that my fiddle, called *bkrashis dbang rgyal*,
Does not possess a little mother!
If the strings from the goat
Are not its little mother, what else?

Do not think that my fiddle, called *bkrashis dbang rgyal*,
Does not possess any brothers!
If the ten fingers of my hand
Are not its brothers, what else?

Do not think that my fiddle, called *bkrashis dbang rgyal*,
Does not possess any friends!
If the sweet sounds of its own mouth
Are not its friends, what else?

REFRAIN: *Shab shâb ma zhig shab shâb ma zhig.*
Thse sâng ma zhig sang mol.

The next is a song of Kesar, "The deified Mongolian Emperor of Siberia,"[2] the national hero of Tibet (who appears to be an oriental Balder) whose festival is held in the spring at the re-awakening of the year.

KESAR RETURNING TO 'ABRUGUMA, HIS WIFE.

If she, taking the shape of a turquoise dove,
Should go to soar in the highest skies,
I, taking the shape of a white falcon,
Will go to take her home again.

If she, taking the shape of a turquoise dove,
Should go to flee into the highest zenith,

[1] *bkrashis dbang rgyal* means "Happiness, powerful king."
[2] Col. Waddell's *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, p. 334.

I, taking the shape of a white falcon,
Will go to follow after her.

If she, taking the shape of the fish "gold-eye,"
Should go to float in the deepest ocean,
I taking the shape of a white-breasted otter,
Will go to take her home again.

If she, taking the shape of the fish "gold-eye,"
Should go to flee into the widest ocean,
I, taking the shape of the white-breasted otter,
Will go to follow after her.[1]

THE POOR GIRL AND THE RICH GIRL.

The poor girl laments:

Oh, you rich child of a rich man,
You have milk in china,
I, the poor child of one who possesses nothing,
I have buttermilk in a cup.
Oh, you rich child of a rich man,
Your silk dress touches the ground.
I am the poor child of one who possesses nothing,
And my rags touch the ground.

The rich girl replies:

Thinking I will drink some water
I arrived at the bank of the river.
The water however was frozen
And I did not get drinking water.
The fish was frozen in the ice
And the hope of the duck was not fulfilled.

The poor girl again complains:

Oh, you daughter-in-law of a rich man,
You carried a child on your lap.
I, the poor child of one who possesses nothing,
I carried a young cat in my lap.

[1] Kesar, after having taken the food and drink of forgetfulness, had forgotten 'aBruguma. Now that the birds, coming from the south, have brought him a message from her, he decides to win her again.

Oh, you daughter-in-law of a rich man,
You stirred tea in the churn.
I, the poor child of one who possesses nothing,
Had to stir water in a churn.

The rich girl says:

Thinking it will become happy and fat,
They sent the lamb to the meadow.
The thought that the wolf would come,
That thought did not enter their minds.[1]

As the Bunan pilgrims from Lahoul, formerly a province of the Ladakhi kingdom, went on their way to sacred Triloknath, they beguiled the tedium of the stony road by singing with endless repetitions:

Oh exalted one! Let no illness come! Render us salvation!
Mayest thou think of it! Morning and evening we trust in thee!
Later on in life, whatever way I may find,
Oh, mayest thou grant there something good! O exalted one!

A song called "Preparations for a Dance" gives practical advice which shows the whole world kin:

The girls of the lower villages are clever in dancing,
Get up then for a dance, all you girls!
To improve your figure, put on a shawl!
To improve your complexion, smear your face three times with *shoglo*![2]
Having put on the shawl, come to the dance!
Having smeared your faces, come to the dance!

And if anyone wants to have further proof that the quaint, ugly, kindly Ladakhis possess a rich store of imagination and poetry, let him get a copy of Mr. Francke's *Ladakhi Songs*.

[1] The general idea is that apparent happiness is not always real. The parents, seeking their daughter's happiness had married her to a rich man without ever thinking of the wolf (the mother-in-law?).

[2] A herb, the yellow juice of which is smeared over the face.

Mrs. Bishop, in her book *Among the Tibetans*, speaks in eloquent terms of the intellectual attainments of the Moravian missionaries she met with on her journey, and their successors at the present day maintain the standard of high thinking in the midst of the plainest of living for which they were remarkable in the remote Himalayan fastnesses where their lot was cast. In their solitude they keep themselves in touch with the outer world by means of the literature of the day, besides contributing in many instances to the instruction of mankind by their scholarship. In Khalatse the missionary and his wife and children are the only Europeans, and although during the summer an occasional sportsman may call to see them on his way up to Leh (a three days' journey), which at that season is, comparatively speaking, a gay metropolis, with perhaps, on a rare occasion, as many as half-a-dozen English visitors at a time, yet in the winter the isolation is complete, and when the sunlight does not reach the deep, narrow valley till eleven o'clock and leaves again at three, the spirits are apt to be much depressed. The high altitude tells greatly on the nerves after a few years' residence in it, many of the children of Europeans die before the age of two, and the holiday trip home comes at very much longer intervals than in the case of our British missionaries to foreign countries. In the midst of all these trials it is a brave sight to see men interesting themselves in their surroundings and keeping up their learning, instead of giving way to idleness and despondency.

One day when I was walking towards the village at Khalatse with Mr. Francke and his wife and children, his two little boys ran on in front and then came to me to give me a miniature chorten which they had

taken out of a large funereal chorten standing by the roadside.

"Oh, I don't think you should do that," said their father, "the people might not like it." Then turning to me he added, pointing to the miniature, "That was a Khalatse villager who died about a year ago; I used to have many a long talk with him."

I put this relic carefully away along with the one of the Lama from Leh, and when I came home took them with me on several visits I paid, as interesting curiosities to show to my friends; but one or two of my hostesses confided to me afterwards that they were very much relieved when I took myself and my chortens away, as they did not like having dead men's bones in their houses. In vain I assured them that though the bones had lived under the same roof with me for months I had never seen any ghosts; it was hinted that they need not be brought again. The number and quality of these images depend on the wealth and standing of the deceased from whose ashes they are made, and judged by this rule this villager must have been rich or highly respected, or possibly both, for there were dozens of him beautifully moulded and ornamented with embossed rows of Buddhas, and having a tiny piece of stick on the top by way of a hti or umbrella; but the poor Lama had evidently been of small account, for he was so badly kneaded that he soon came to bits, and had to be stuck together again with seccotine—a curious fate for a Tibetan monk.

I greatly regretted not having the opportunity of seeing Mr. Francke's valuable library of Tibetan books and manuscripts, as it was packed up to be taken to Germany, whither he was going to accompany his wife,

whose health had so completely broken down from the effects of climate and overwork that she required several years' rest. He told me that the Tibetans use wooden blocks for printing some of their books, and that others, more valuable, are in manuscript. A newspaper in the Tibetan language is published in Leh, edited and partly written by the Moravian missionaries there and at Khalatse, which serves to guide and enlighten public opinion.

The morning I left Khalatse, Mr. Francke walked with me as far as the fort at the bridge over the Indus. Fort and bridge are both modern, replacing ancient structures, the latter being formerly of willow rope; near them he pointed out many incised rocks, some with inscriptions in characters dating from many centuries back, and others covered with hunting and battle scenes, ibex, yaks, horses, etc. The rocks, mostly granite, are blackened as if by fire and polished, and on being scratched the natural light colour appears, forming an admirable surface for drawing. There is one rock carved like a chess-board, but with many more squares than we use for chess, which was evidently used for some kind of game. Coming down the Indus valley I saw numerous inscriptions, old and new, passages from the sacred books of the Tibetans and the favourite *Om mani padmi hong*, also the same scenes and animals as at Khalatse. There was one animal, not in profile as all the others were, but spread out flat with the fore-paws much feathered, which I think must have been meant for a flying fox, a creature that is found near Shigar in Baltistan.

The Tibetans still practise this branch of art. On the face of a precipitous cliff rising sheer from the bed of

the Indus, where a path by the edge of the river has been blasted out of the rocks only within the last few years, there was a particularly fine specimen, a sacred emblem, circular in form and about three feet in diameter; unfortunately it was impossible to photograph it owing to the narrowness of the path at this point. In most of the battle and hunting scenes the arms are bows and arrows, showing that they were executed before fire-arms were in use in the country, but guns are introduced in a few, and in one there are men armed with guns fighting with others armed with swords, one warrior being represented lying on the ground, dead or wounded. This is probably the record of an encounter between Ladakhis and Dogras during the invasion of the country in 1835.

On saying good-bye to Mr. Francke he asked me to be on the watch for rock carvings, and also for Buddhist remains in Baltistan, now a Mohammedan country, where such relics would be for the most part carefully destroyed. My interest in them was now so keenly aroused that I made enquiry for them everywhere on my journey from Khalatse to Skardo, and I was fortunate enough, besides finding numerous small carvings, to discover a large and important one of Buddha, with three inscriptions,[1] a few miles from Skardo. These inscriptions date from about the year 1000 A.D. and are interesting because at that time Buddhists and Hindus in these parts were experiencing the first effects of the invasion of the Mohammedan Mahmud of Ghazni, whose name has lately been found mentioned in a Sanskrit inscription in the Swat valley, made in the year of his death.

[1] Page 297.

SPECIMENS OF TIBETAN MUSIC.

Written down and Harmonised by the Rev. A. H. Francke.

No. 1. THE KING'S GARDEN, LEH.

No. 2. THE GOLDSMITH. A DANCE SONG.

No. 3. THE ARISTOCRACY OF STOK.

No. 4. THE ABC SONG.

No. 5.

No. 6.

No. 7.

No. 8.

No. 9.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER XVI.

SKIRBICHAN AND THE HANU NULLAH.

THE road from Khalatse down the Indus is very well made, but is sometimes so high up on the face of the cliff that on approaching a sharp turn it seemed as if the pony were going to step into space, which made me so giddy at first that I had to shut my eyes not to see what was going to happen; but after one day's experience all such feelings of discomfort quite disappeared.

I had now left the road which leads from Srinagar to Leh, and entered a region which no white woman had ever been in till this summer, and it may be many years before another passes through it. An occasional sportsman, a Government official, or a missionary is the only European ever seen in these wilds. I stopped the first day at Dumkar, a large village beautifully situated, but with no camping-ground; and as the travellers, few and far between as they are, who come this way never camp here, I was looked upon as a curiosity. My tent was put up in a little terraced field which had just been cleared of barley, and was surrounded by walnut and apricot trees. The latter were laden with ripe fruit which dropped all round me, even plump into my pudding dish as I sat at dinner. A boy and an old woman brought me baskets of apricots, and a little Lama's offering

was peaches, with a bunch of blue, purple, and pink cornflowers in the middle. From Dumkar to Skirbichan the march next day was only six miles, which Makhti, my own pony, would have done comfortably in less than two hours, but since I had sent her back to Srinagar and had to hire ponies the rate of travel had been very slow. Coolies carried the baggage, and received two annas each for taking a load of sixty or seventy pounds weight all that distance, and were charmed with a backshish of a halfpenny each, chorussing "*Deo lé, deo lé, mem sahib,*" when I gave it to them. The camping-ground at Skirbichan is in an orchard of splendid walnut, apricot, and apple trees, and when some red Lamas with yellow scarves stood about under them, with gompa-crowned cliffs rising in the background above them, the picture was a feast for an artist. What a pity it is the camera does not reproduce colour! A photograph is a constant disappointment on that score.

There is often a sound of voices far off in those deep valleys; it is the villagers talking to their friends who are ascending the paths zigzagging up the mountain sides, and the conversation can be carried on for a mile or two.

On the dry sands of the Indus valley large cushions of the wild caper with white flowers, each measuring four or five inches across, were scattered, which must have immensely long roots to reach any moisture, for they were often a long way back from the river, and many feet above its level. Tamarisks are also met with, but are cut down so often that they never grow to be more than bushes; on the side of the hill opposite Khalatse, however, on a spot very difficult to get at, where there is a spring, a little clump has by chance

been left to grow into tall trees, and now, although wood is so valuable there, the natives would not touch them on any account, as they believe a spirit has made them its dwelling-place.

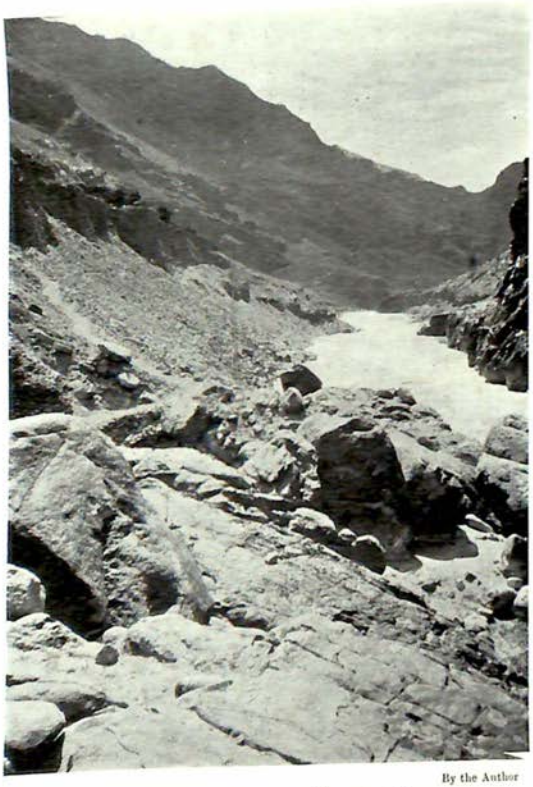
There is an old killa or fort on the top of a rock behind the village of Skirbichan which I was anxious to visit, and the lumbardar acted as guide, for it is often difficult to find any practicable way up the cliffs on which such buildings are perched. Aziz Khan went with me as interpreter, and the two men hoisted me up places which I could not manage to crawl up on hands and knees. The lumbardar was quite an old man, but in characteristic Tibetan fashion ran up places where I could barely stand. I was curious to know his age, but he declined to tell it for fear I should write it down! When we got to the fort there was nothing to see in or around it except the fine view—no inscriptions or potsherds or worked stones of any description. It is simply a square tower of rough boulders, plastered inside and outside with clay—a watch-tower probably, for a much larger fort is on the lower level on another crest close to it. One corner is walled off, and is used as an infirmary for ponies ill of any infectious disease, but it must be nearly enough to kill the poor animals to drag them up to such a height. On the way down we went to the lower fort to see the gompa, which has been formed out of two or three of its rooms, and the one Lama, a young man who lives in it, took us over it. A new wooden door and porch had been put in an old wall, and gave admittance to a small landing-place at the foot of a pitch-dark stair of rough pieces of stone. Up this we stumbled, I holding my handkerchief tight over nose and mouth, and Aziz Khan with the end of his pagri

over his. The smell was so awful that I had a fit of nausea as soon as I entered, and "Oogh, oogh, oogh," said the old lumbardar pityingly, "oogh, oogh." Upstairs there was a room which was the priest's dwelling-place (how he escapes from being poisoned is a mystery) and above it another opening into a third, which was the temple. In the outer room there was a fresco of Buddha in contemplation; on one side of him the gods of the air, the earth, and the water, coloured white, red, and blue; and on the other, a goddess playing a lute with a long curved neck; above were various other mythological figures. There was a large Wheel of Life on a side-wall, supported by the hands and feet of a demon who grinned over the top, with a third eye in the middle of his forehead, and who wore a coronet of miniature skulls; some of the masks shown in the photographs of Lamas at Himis and Leh were likenesses of him. The gompa itself was so dark that at first nothing could be seen, the only light coming through the small doorway, but in a minute or two a figure of a many-headed, many-armed god standing twelve feet high revealed itself, with a table of offerings in front; but the lazy Lama, who, the lumbardar said, spent all his time in preparing and drinking chang, had not taken the trouble to put the customary dishes of ghie, water, and flowers on it. The god was like one at Leh which had eleven heads; but, as Aziz Khan remarked, this was "another fellow," for he had a great many more than that. There were several chortens of various sizes standing round the room, some containing the bones of Lamas and some partly made of them. We went downstairs more easily than we came up, and as all the doors had been opened wide the air was much fresher. On getting outside I gave the Lama

twopence and told him to clean the place, at which he smiled doubtfully, as if it would be quite an unnecessary exertion. If he were put in a tub himself and well scrubbed he would come out much lighter in colour, for his bare arms were literally caked with dirt. We scrambled down the hill again, the lumbardar on one side of me and my servant on the other, all the easiest places being carefully picked out, though crossing one that was specially recommended was like walking on a roof with the slates giving way. We stopped to look at two Lamas and a workman making chortens in a sort of gallery with a ladder leading up to it; there were three chortens, one newly finished, and I asked if they had mixed any bones with the clay, but no, these were simply monuments.

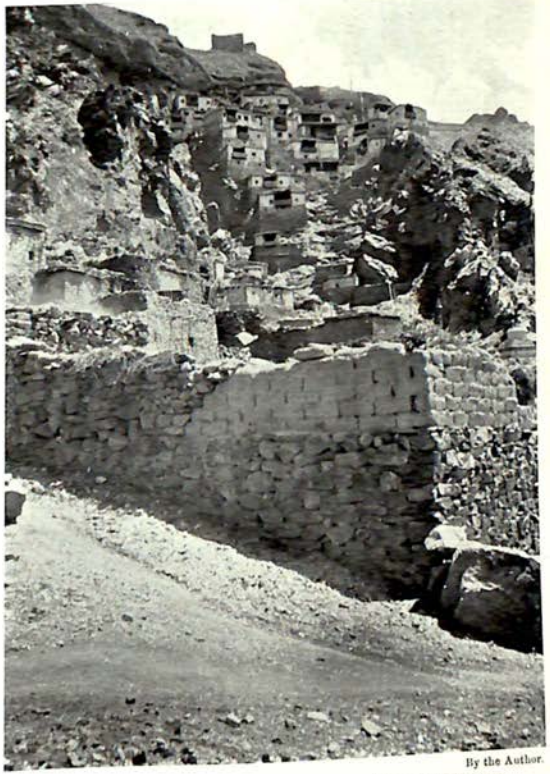
The next morning the lumbardar took me to the larger gompa on the side of the hill behind the village, which has been formed out of the old castle, where, in the troublous times of yore, all the villagers lived for the sake of security. Now it is entirely in the possession of the Lamas, and consists of a cluster of tiny houses climbing up the face of the cliff to the gompa at the top. These houses have for the most part merely one room about twelve feet by eight, built of rough stones, the spaces between them plastered with mud, the flat roof of poplar poles covered with mud, a hole in it serving as a chimney; inside, a platform about two feet high runs along the back of the room, having a rough oven or fire-place at one end, made of a few boulders. Some of these houses had doors padlocked, but many of them were merely shelters for animals. The very narrow lanes are winding and steep, with two or three steps here and there. The gompa consists as usual of several rooms on

different levels, and in one of them the head Lama and four or five others were going through a service, one chanting from a sacred book lying open on a low stand before him, and the others responding, with interludes of braying of trumpets, clashing of cymbals, and beating of drums, played by the officiating priests. The room was so small that four of them sitting in a row filled up one wall as far as the table of offerings which ran along the back of it. The performance stopped while I was looking in, and lasted a very few minutes after I left, for the head Lama came directly into another room where I was and demanded backshish, but was quite satisfied with four annas. This upper room was much larger than the one below, and had many frescoes of gods on the walls, and the usual images and offerings. Another room was the library, fitted up with shelves along a part of the walls, the vacant places being covered with frescoes; the books were placed between two boards, and wrapped in pieces of cloth in the usual manner. The Lamas allowed me to take a photo of the interior, opening door and windows wide, and standing patiently for ten minutes while I took a time exposure, but the light was so bad that the result was a failure. I was rather surprised when I was given permission to do it, and still more when two or three Lamas stood in a group to let me take them. They and their flocks seem to vary a good deal in their ideas of what their religion allows them to do. Mr. Francke was astonished when he heard the Lama at Leh gompa had given me a miniature chorten, and when I asked him how I could get a prayer-flag, he said that the people would never give one, and the only way to do was to pick one up from the ground, as they are not put back in their place when once blown down. The



By the Author

INDUS VALLEY, NEAR SKIRBICHAN.



By the Author.

GOMPA, SKIRBICHAN, FORMED OUT OF ANCIENT CASTLE.

To face page 174.

lumbardar at Skirbichan, however, got one made for me; it had a picture of a horse in the middle, surrounded by sentences, and was printed from a block. It may be that the people are more ready to let a lay person than a missionary have objects connected with their worship.

The last apartment visited was the kitchen, partly hewn out of the rock which formed the roof. There was a large and very heavy stone degche, or cooking pot, with a place for fire under it, two brass degches from India, and one earthenware teapot from Leh; and, reared up in one corner, a wooden tea-churn about a yard long, in which tea, barley-flour, butter, and salt or soda are churned, after having been previously boiled together. The coolies often carried such churns on their backs to use on their journeys.

It was very hot when I got back to my tent at noon, and I was glad to sit in the shade of a large walnut tree, one of many in the camping-ground. An old beggar pulled a capful of apricots from a tree quite near, which did not belong to him at all, brought them to me and then expected a backshish. He sat down, twirled his spindle, and tried to make conversation, but as I did not understand and could not respond, he tired of such dull company and soon went away.

The lumbardar had an agate bead on his necklace very like the one I bought at Khalatse, but darker, and I asked him what he would sell it for, but he said the necklace was an old one which had belonged to his father, who had left it to him, and he did not care to part with it or any of the beads. I thought it nice of the old man, for he was very poor, and money is exceedingly scarce in this country.

I left Skirbichan at 6.30 a.m. on the 31st of July by a road which had been described to me by several sportsmen as "poisonous" on account of the heat; but the sky was

rather cloudy and a pleasant breeze met me, so that I found an hour's walk an agreeable variety from riding. The road is very good, never less than four feet wide, built on substantial retaining walls where the ground is inclined to crumble, and level from side to side, which is a great matter, for a road that slopes in the same direction as the (perhaps) shaly precipice it lies across is not pleasant. There are many carvings of hunting scenes on the rocks, and I photographed one in which there was quite a crowd of figures. In six hours we came to Hanu Nullah, which turns sharply to the right, leaving the Indus behind. This gorge is the wildest piece of scenery I have ever beheld, with huge slabs and corners of rock thrown down to the water's edge and strewing the mountain sides in chaotic confusion, and above, peaks rise thousands of feet straight up towards the sky. A stream of clear green water foams and tumbles to join the muddy Indus, and at the first turn we came upon poplars wherever they could gain a footing; then, as the gorge widened, on patches of barley, wheat, and vetches surrounded by apricot and mulberry trees. The barley was not ripe here yet, but some of the rocks were covered with apricots drying in the sun. One or two women passed, quite different in type and dress from those at Skirbichan only twenty miles away. Instead of the pberak they wear a square flat cap (the old-fashioned Ladakhi cap) projecting over the forehead and coming only to the nape of the neck, ornamented with rows of beads and gilt chains along one half, rows of darning needles and smaller needles along the other half and across the back and a bunch of brilliant-coloured flowers, marigolds or poppies generally, stuck coquettishly on one edge. A coat of dark cloth tied with a girdle and reaching to the knees and pyjamas complete the dress, the feet, remarkably

small and well-shaped, being bare, while quantities of brass necklaces, bangles, and rings are worn by the well-to-do. The faces of these people are Aryan, often small and delicately oval, unlike the broad, flat faces of the Mongolians of the Indus valley, and the skin is very much darker, partly "with Phoebus' amorous pinches black" and partly with something less poetical—dirt; for they have actually great smudges of what looks like soot on cheeks and forehead. Drew[1] says they never wash, but burn twigs of pencil cedar and let the scent and smoke from it come over them inside their clothes, which they do by stepping to and fro over a fire on the ground. They do not resemble their neighbours the Ladakhis on one side or the Baltis on the other; but in feature and dirt are very like some Astor men I afterwards saw on the Gilgit road; their own tradition is that they came originally from Gilgit itself. They are a colony of Buddhist Dards, one of the Scythian tribes of Herodotus, which probably emigrated while Baltistan and the surrounding countries (forcibly converted to Mohammedanism four or five centuries ago) were Buddhists, and, bringing their religion with them, have been allowed to retain it by the Ladakhis, who profess the same creed. In an ancient hymnal[2] which is used at a triennial festival still celebrated at Dah (on the Indus, ten miles below the Hanu Nullah) and other villages of the Eastern Dards whose forefathers emigrated from Gilgit, founding colonies as they advanced into Ladakh, a list of place-names is contained which shows their route as they spread south-eastwards up the Indus and Shayok valleys. All the villages mentioned in it are well known, such as Rangdum,

[1] See his *Jummoo and Kashmir Territories.*

[2] Translated into English by Mr. Francke. Some of his notes on it are here quoted.

Shigar, Skardo, Parkuta, Kiris, and Hanu itself, and I passed through some of them on my journey from this point.

The gompa at Hanu is under the control of that at Skirbichan; the people are polyandrous, the women having as many as five husbands, according to Drew. Aziz Khan told me that the people of the village of Das on the Gilgit Road, between Burzil and Astor, and of Rangdum in Suru (100 miles due east from Srinagar in the mountains) are like them in appearance, the "ladies" being the same both as regards dress and smudges. The Rangdum villagers are Buddhists and polyandrous, and they and the Hanus speak a kind of Tibetan differing a little from Ladakhi; but the Das people's dialect resembles that of the Dards at Dras, they are polygamous and call themselves Shiahs (a Mohammedan sect) though Aziz Khan saw neither mosque, moulvie (priest), nor nimaz (religious service) at Das; apparently their enforced conversion from their ancient religion has been merely nominal.

CHAPTER XVII.

GOMA HANU. A LONELY VIGIL AND AN ATTACK ON THE CAMP.

THERE are three villages in the Hanu nullah, and beyond the first one it closes in so completely that anyone not knowing there is a way out at the upper end would be inclined to turn back, but a narrow path cut through the rock leads into another and wider cultivated valley with a gorge turning out of it at right angles. The village and gompa of Hanu are at the foot of it. Here we expected to camp, and we were just going to cross the bridge to the bagh when two old men came hurrying to meet us and said this was not the proper place, that all the sahibs camp at a place about a dak further up, and that the lumbardar was there at the moment. I found out afterwards that the Accountant-General's party, the last to pass through, and who wished to get nearer the Chorbat La so as to save a march, had camped higher up, a sufficient reason for the natives to hurry everyone else on, whatever their plans might be. Miss Kendall, who was the first white woman to pass through this nullah and across the Chorbat La, had camped at this village, and if I had done so too I should have been saved from the experiences of the following day. At the time I was rather puzzled, for we had now ridden

the twenty miles which the guide-books say is the distance from Skirbichan, and a "dak," which may mean anything from three to eight miles, but is generally reckoned to be four or five (the distance each dak-runner carries the mail-bags on the way through the country) seemed to put the camping-place too far away. As native ideas of distance are of the haziest, I thought it might be only a mile or so after all and decided to go on, especially as Aziz Khan said that this did not look like a good bagh, but the road lengthened and lengthened out before us, till it became evident that the dak would be quite four miles. As we advanced vegetation increased, the hillsides had patches of greenery on them, and a great number and variety of wild flowers were to be seen, the trimmings of the people's caps showing that there were also cultivated flowers in this district. At last we came to a clear rushing side stream, where I sat down under a shady bank overgrown with what looked like a kind of furze-bush, which, with the quantities of forget-me-nots lining the edges of a tiny brook our path had led us up, made me feel at home. It was nearly three o'clock, and I had had only a scone and a bottle of milk since a six o'clock breakfast, so I was hungry and enjoyed the cold chicken and milk pudding set before me. Just as I had finished, a woman and a boy sat down beside me and looked smilingly at me. I wrapped up in a Japanese paper doyley a roll that was left and gave it to them, making signs that they were each to have half. The woman took her cap off and began to pick some of the flowers out for me, when I noticed rows of darning needles in it and asked her for one to fasten the flowers in my blouse. The boy made signs that they were used for mending clothes and

shoes; they were the same as some I had seen at Skirbichan, which were made there and were not distinguishable from English needles, except that the eyes were not grooved. In exchange I gave the woman a safety pin and showed her how to use it. Just then a man came, and they showed him the roll, but when he said something, they handed it back to me. I asked Aziz Khân the meaning of this, and they told him their religion forbade them to eat my food. I told him to give Batta the roll when we got to camp, little thinking how glad I should be of it afterwards myself, and then mounted my pony and soon arrived at a field that was shown as the camping-ground; but it was so hot and dusty that it would not do, and we found another close to the river in the bottom of the valley.

I sat down at the corner of a patch of vetches with beautiful dark purple blossoms, and as there were many wild flowers growing round, I began to stroll about to look at them, and immediately came upon a hollow place in the ground filled up with loose stones, and a great many flies hovering over it, which made me think there must be something horrid there. On stooping and peering among the stones, I saw a black hairy head and two dead, half-open eyes turned up towards me. It was startling, but after all it was only a cow that had died a natural death and been buried here; for in this land, where it is sacred, no animal of its kind is ever put to death, though in some places the people would have eaten it instead of burying it. I called Aziz Khan to look at it, and told him we could not put the tents up beside that. He looked very much disgusted, and set off to look for another resting-place, piloting me across a very rickety bridge.

Once more I sat down to wait, and a woman and two men, one with a spindle, came and, seating themselves within a yard of me, gazed with all their might, sometimes making remarks to each other. This sort of thing is embarrassing, and to distract the attention of these children of nature I began to show them some of my things. The man with the spindle had taken charge of my whip and umbrella; I told him the whip came from Ladakh (the natives always call Leh Ladakh), and I opened the umbrella, which he held over his head with many chuckles. Next I pulled out a blue gauze veil and tinted spectacles, which he tried on, gazing at his friends through them, and he was just going to draw on one of my gloves when Aziz Khan appeared and sternly forbade him, on which he laughingly gave it back to me. A nice place had been found for the tent, and I was accompanied to it by my three acquaintances and two or three other people who had been following Aziz Khan about. A good part of the population seemed to have nothing to do but to watch what we did, which is perhaps not surprising, as I am only the fourth white woman who has ever passed this way, all having happened to come this year.

Again I sat down, this time in a little walled enclosure in which numbers of wild flowers and many feathery grasses were growing. It was now five o'clock, and I began to long for my tea and wish the coolies would come, but the sun was shining and the air was delicious, and nothing else seemed to matter much. Three women looked at me over the wall, then climbed it and came and sat beside me and tried to talk, but it was no good. Six o'clock and still no coolies. Aziz Khan had sent a man at five to tell them to come here, but he returned now saying he had not seen them, and Aziz Khan set off himself

down the valley. After a while a man who spoke a little Hindustani told me the coolies were at the other bagh, and asked would I like to take the ponies and follow Aziz Khan there? But I said no, I must stay where I was. The stone I was sitting on grew harder and harder, and I became hungrier and hungrier, and longed more and more for that tea. The man with the spindle sat down near me and twirled it and tried to look comfortingly at me. Seven o'clock, and I suddenly bethought me there might be something to eat in the tiffin basket, which I found after some searching, and in it half of the roll which the dog was to have had, and oh! joy, half a chicken. (The chickens here are about as large as pigeons.) The Hindustani man found the water-bag and filled the tumbler, and after devouring the food and drinking the delicious cold water, I felt revived and fit for anything. Half a dozen men had been sitting under the wall outside the field, but most of them went away one by one while I was eating, and as I did not know how many hours I might have to wait, and did not want to be left alone for fear of animals prowling about, jungle cats and jungle dogs, if nothing worse, I asked the Hindustani man not to go away. Oh, no, he said, he was going to stay, and at once lighted a fire, folding himself up on his heels beside it, while I sat on a high stone near it with my feet on another. Eight o'clock, and it was quite dark. The scent of the flowers and herbs at my feet grew stronger, and the stars came out in such myriads that the heavens were paved with them; the Plough and each separate star in it looked twice as large as it does at home, and wondrous constellations hung in the south, such as I never remember to have seen before, all glittering and magnified, and showing geometrical figures in their light in a manner

visible only to very short-sighted eyes. When I look at the stars through a glass which reduces them to what people with good sight can see I am always disappointed in them, and rejoice that they appear so much more beautiful to me. Defects sometimes have valuable compensations.

Another hour passed, and I reflected how strange it was to be sitting on that hillside without a shelter, with no food left, (and the food of the country quite impossible on account of the filthy habits of the people) ignorant of the language, and not knowing what had become of my servants. Suddenly, soon after nine, there was a shout in the distance, then one nearer, and in a few minutes Aziz Khan walked in and told me he had found Subhana, Ramzana, and the coolies all lying sound asleep in the first bagh we had passed, nearly four miles down. Their excuse was that the coolies had said it was the proper camping-place and had laid their loads down there, and that a man had told them I had said they were to wait there till I came (which was of course utterly untrue), and there the two servants would have waited till next day without taking the trouble to look for me, or to find out if I had gone further. Aziz Khan was furious, and told me he had given all the men, coolies and all, a tremendous beating with a stout khud-stick, nearly as tall as himself, which he held in his hand, and which I suspect he had taken in case of any such punishment being necessary. The coolies began to arrive, and set to work unpacking quite cheerfully, for these people take a beating as a matter of course.

Another fire was lighted, and by its glare the tent was pitched and furnished; in the meantime my comfortable canvas chair was put together, into which I

sank gratefully, tea was prepared and spread on the cook-house bake-board at my feet, with a candle to light the way to my mouth, and by half-past ten I was safely in bed, having left orders that I was not to be called in the morning.

The next afternoon I was sitting in my tent when I heard a tremendous uproar arise suddenly at the entrance to the field just in front of the servants' tent, men fighting with sticks and throwing stones and shouting at the top of their voices, and some women, who watched the fray over a wall behind me, screaming dismally. At last all the men ran away except one, who was taken prisoner and dragged along to me for judgment by Aziz Khan, of whom I demanded an explanation of the scene. The man he had hold of was the lumbardar, who had been told on my arrival that I should want a sheep, chickens, eggs, milk, and wood, which he promised to bring at six the next morning, but at six o'clock he came to say they would not be brought till two, and at two that they would not be brought till four. At four o'clock he and the chowkidar and a dozen villagers or zemindars (farmers) came and said that I was not a shooting sahib and not a European (they seem to think a woman can't be a European), I was only a mem sahib with three men, and that they would not give me any supplies, and would beat my servants. Aziz Khan showed the lumbardar the perwanah which the Wazir Wazarat had sent me at Leh, giving orders that I was to have what supplies I required, and told him he must give them; but he and the other men said they did not care for the Wazir or his perwanah, whereupon Aziz Khan gave the lumbardar a slap in the face, and this was the signal for the fight to begin. "He is beating our lumbardar!" they cried,

and five of them set on Aziz Khan, and ten on the other two servants. Ramzana, a true Kashmiri, did not attempt to defend himself, and when a big stone caught him in the back flung himself down on the ground crying out, "Oh, my mother; he has killed me!" "Be quiet, you swine," shouted Aziz Khan, who had just ducked to avoid a large stone aimed at his head, which would have killed him if it had struck him, and had seized a chunk of firewood with which he was hammering the nearest heads, while Subhana laid about him with a khud-stick, which in the end was broken to pieces. "You don't know what a Pathan is," roared Aziz Khan, "I'll kill the whole fifteen of you"; and he would have done it too if he had seen cause, and enjoyed it. The men, no doubt, took fright at this, finding that they had tackled the wrong people, and drew off, uttering angry cries. The women watching had expected to see some fun, but shrieked in dismay when they saw the fun was on the wrong side.

When I had heard the outlines of this story, of which I have been given some details since, Aziz Khan put the Wazir's perwanah into the lumbardar's hand, and made him look at it, so that he could not pretend he had not seen it, and I asked if he still refused to give me supplies; he replied that he could not give them, so I told him I would report him, both to the Wazir Wazarat and to the Commissioner Sahib at Leh, and ordered him off. He looked very silly, and as if he would like to say something; but I said again, "Jao" (a rather contemptuous word for "go away"), and waved my hand towards the entrance, and he went quailing beneath the power of the British eye and followed by Aziz Khan, who, as soon as he was out of my sight, gave him a good beating,

and tore half of his beard out; he showed me afterwards with a bunch of withered grass what it looked like! I slept in my clothes that night, for I did not know what threats the men might have uttered when they were being driven off and I wanted to be ready for all emergencies; but I slept soundly, for I knew Batta would make a noise almost sufficient to wake the dead if any intruders came, and would nearly tear them to pieces, for he was a savage creature and had already bitten at least one person who he thought had no right to come into the camp. I was extremely surprised at this day's incident, for all the people I had seen and spoken to hitherto seemed to be very friendly and amiable, and gave me smiling greetings; it gave me a queer feeling to think I had been entirely alone among them for all those hours the previous evening, but I am sure their conduct this day was entirely due to ignorance of the position a European woman takes, for I am the first mem sahib to camp alone at this village. Miss Kendall passed through it without stopping, and the other two ladies who were here were the wife and sister of the Accountant-General of Kashmir, whom they were accompanying on his official tour through the country. The lumbardar of a neighbouring village supplied me with the food I wanted, besides two riding-ponies, three zhos,[1] and a number of coolies, when I left next morning to go to the camp at the foot of the Chorbat La. He had promised everything without looking at the perwanah, having heard of the combat and being only too glad to be rid of such a firebrand as the Pathan. A troop of coolies whom we did not require said they were going our

[1] A zho is a cross between a yak and a common cow, and is a good pack animal.

way and would accompany us, so we went off with flying colours and a strong escort of the very villagers who had attacked us, and who were as good as gold all the way to the next village, Puyan, three days' march off, where I dismissed them. The funny thing about many Asiatics is that directly you show fight when they try to impose on you they turn round and become your sworn friends instead of feeling any resentment.

It would have been very awkward not to get supplies at Goma Hanu, for we had to take everything except wood and water to Puyan on the Shayok River, on the other side of the Chorbat La; but it gave such a distinctly old-world flavour of adventure to my journey to have my camp attacked by that ancient people, the Scythians, that I am afraid I am rather proud of it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FROM GOMA HANU TO KHAPALLU OVER THE CHORBAT LA.

THE change of scenery in the Hanu nullah was as surprising as the change in the dress and manners of the people, considering that we had only come about 23 miles from Skirbichan. The bare and savage grandeur of the mountains in the Indus valley and the lower part of the Hanu gorge gradually gave way to softer scenes, the slopes were gentler and covered with patches of herbage in many places, wild rose-bushes were in abundance, still covered with deep red and pink blooms, though they were over long ago on lower ground, and the fields and water-courses were lined with the most exquisite wild flowers. I gathered fifteen different kinds in the space of a few square yards in the little bagh my tent was pitched in at Goma Hanu, while up close to the pass the mountain side, 13,000 or 14,000 feet above the sea, was covered with a great variety of them, many new to me; but among those familiar were forget-me-nots of the richest blue, pink, and lilac asters, mauve crane's-bill, meadow orchis, star of Bethlehem, a small yellow ranunculus and a small edelweiss.

The Hanu men wear dark cloth caps shaped like a

jelly-bag, but square instead of pointed, the flap hanging down to the nape of the neck, and they all pin bunches of brilliant-coloured flowers on the front or side of them, marigolds, the sacred flower of the Hindu, being the favourite adornment. My ponyman had three poppies neatly arranged on the front of his cap. When we were on the way up the nullah a woman came hurrying from some huts with a bowl of milk for him. She too had her cap trimmed with flowers, wore a necklace of coloured beads, and had large round brass ornaments, looking like Scotch highland brooches, fastening her cloak on the shoulders, and bunches of cowries hung from her waist. She was a picturesque figure, but looked rather comical with patches of soot on her face, to match the men, no doubt, who are just like her in that respect.

In order to cross the Chorbat La early in the morning before the snow had melted, I camped close to it, making a short march of 10 miles from Goma Hanu, but the road was so steep and rough and the ponies were so slow that we took three and a half hours to do it. The two riding-ponies we took from Hanu to Puyan were very small and thin, and my saddle, though padded with two blankets, was too large for either of them; it was continually slipping when the pony jerked itself over high boulders, and twice I was hung up on the pommel and had to be lifted off. At last I exchanged with Aziz Khan and rode cross-saddle so comfortably that I felt I should never want to use a side-saddle again in going uphill on very rough ground. In going downhill, however, the latter is safer, as the pommel prevents one shooting over the pony's head, which I very nearly did once or twice on the following day.

Less than a quarter of a mile from the camping-ground

HANU WOMEN.

By Miss Christie.

THE HANU NULLAH. MEN FROM THE VILLAGE.

By the Author

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five nice-looking ponies were grazing on the road-side; they followed mine and had to be chased away, but still kept very near us. During the night one of them was killed and eaten by some wild animal, either a snow-leopard or a jungle-dog. My ponies and zhos had been tied up in an enclosed place beside the tents for safety.

Though it was quite cold at this spot even in the afternoon on the 2nd of August, and the altitude was 15,000 feet, the ground was covered with a profusion of wild flowers.

The next morning when we started for the Pass at 6.30 it was very fine and sunny, but the sky soon became overcast and continued so, which was fortunate, as it prevented the snow melting. A few patches of it lay in sheltered hollows, and beside one high on the mountain side a herd of ibex was feeding; they would return to still higher ground by eight o'clock. In the distance there was occasionally the roar of an avalanche of stones loosened by the wind. The first part of the way led by a very steep ascent up a low hill, the zhos, which had gone on in front, looking almost as if they were directly above my head as they stopped to take breath on the top; from here a level but rough track led to the bottom of the pass. The Chorbat La is quite unlike the Zoji La and the Chang La, which have level valleys at the top; but here there is a wall of soft soil, several hundred feet high, between two mountains, which approach to within a quarter of a mile of each other. The wall forms a partition between the valley on the south side and that on the north; the path zigzags steeply up the crumbling southern face, the ponies having to stop every three yards to recover their breath, as the rarity of the air at this height, 16,696 feet, added greatly to their labour.

From the summit the ground falls away as quickly to the north, leaving only a level knife-like ridge running from one to the other of the two mountains it connects. I walked along it backwards and forwards for a few minutes, but it made me feel rather giddy and very thankful there was no wind just then, for there was not a rock or a stone on it to cling to for shelter or support, and one might easily be blown sheer down into the valley below. On the north side a snow-field began abruptly two feet below its edge, and extended far beyond and above it where the mountains rise on each side. The contrast between the summer aspect on one side of the pass and the look of winter on the other, where range after range of mountains, streaked and topped with snow, stretched as far as the eye could see, was very striking.

Our road lay for only half a mile across the snow which was quite hard, thanks to the want of sunshine, except in one or two spots, where I sank up to the knees, and I walked over it in less than twenty minutes. It was a rough descent to the stream at the bottom of the valley, which was reached at 9.30, three hours after striking the tents.

The worst part of the march began now, over boulders and across water for two hours, with only a few yards here and there of the semblance of a path, and when I got down at last and tried to walk, my knees were so stiff with bracing myself in my stirrups that I floundered about as if I were tipsy. Once when the pony was going down a very bad bit, I was in the act of taking a header over his ears when Aziz Khan caught me and pulled me back in the saddle, and I verily believe if I had fallen it would have been the end of me, and then the Cassandra I met at Leh would have had a melancholy satisfaction, on hearing the

news, that the prophecy that this trip would probably be my death had come true. I was very glad at the end of five hours' travelling to reach the camping-ground at Changa, a level meadow beside the stream which had been brawling and obstructive on our course hitherto, but here flowed placidly by many channels among the little flat grassy islands into which it had cut the edges of its banks. A herd of black cattle was grazing near it, belonging to two well-dressed Baltis with blankets thrown round their shoulders over their coats, instead of the greasy goatskins which the Ladakhis wear; their black glossy hair curled in a short fringe from under their neatly rolled pagris. There had been an outbreak of disease among the cattle of Baltistan, in which most of the animals died, and these men had been to Leh to buy fresh stock.

The guide-books say it is twelve miles to Puyan from Changa and that it takes seven hours, so I thought the road must be frightfully bad and was surprised to find the first ten miles excellent. Some mending had been done when the Accountant-General was expected and I got the benefit of it, as I did when I followed the Commissioner up to Leh from Srinagar. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," is a thoroughly oriental injunction, for it is not till some great personage is coming that repairs and improvements are made, and very often under native management all is allowed to go to wrack and ruin afterwards till the next distinguished man's visit is announced.

The twelve miles lengthened out into fifteen, and the last five were very bad in parts, flights of steps forming the path in some places, very steep and rough, and trying to both pony and rider, and oh, horror! landslips leaving a track only six inches wide in the sloping shale, and with a

foaming river far below. I made Aziz Khan walk in front of me over an awful bridge, while I clung to the waistband of his jacket so that I could not see anything but the poles under my feet.

Puyan (or Paxfain, as it is spelt on some maps) is a comfortable-looking village on the Shayok river, at the point where the stream, coming down the Chorbat nullah, falls into it. The Shayok rises more than 200 miles off in the Karakoram (or Mustagh) Mountains, not far from the borders of Yarkand, and joins the Indus opposite Kiris, after a further course of between 60 and 70 miles. We left Ladakh and Buddhism on the other side of the Chorbat La, and were now in Mohammedan Baltistan, where the people are different looking, not at all Mongolian in face, and not dressed in the same way. The old lumbardar at Puyan was a quaint figure in a light-coloured woollen choga and a small felt cap; long black ringlets fell on each side of his face, and a strip of his hair, from the forehead to the nape of the neck, was cut close to the skull, according to the fashion here. He received me at the bagh, having seen my approach from afar, promised all supplies (which were sent immediately) and brought me a basket of peaches, with a bunch of marigolds and sunflowers stuck in the middle. Then a tiny girl brought a basket of apricots, and squatted down close to me awaiting events in the shape of "paisa" (coppers); she had no clothes on to speak of, but across the front of her cap a few beads were strung, with a silver two anna bit as centre ornament, the first beginning of her dowry, no doubt. A boy came with more apricots, very kindly meant but somewhat unnecessary, as apricots were falling from the trees all round. A dish of mulberries was sent in the evening, larger than the Kashmir kind, but not so sweet. The

people here live greatly on fruit, and there were quantities of apricots drying on the rocks and the roofs of the houses.

A large part of the male population came to the bagh to look at the new arrival, and I filled up the time till the baggage came in by taking photographs. Some of the men moved away when they saw the camera, but two, whom I asked to stand for me, did so very cheerfully as if they took it as an honour to be chosen. A little girl with a few tatters hanging about her, and a very small baby tied on her back, flew across the bagh, and there was something so attractive about the slender figure that I sent Aziz Khan, who had not noticed her, to bring her to be photographed. "A lady?" he asked. "No, a little girl, very ragged, with a baby on her back." "Ladies here ten years old have children; very bad, very bad," he said as he went away. In a few minutes he came back to say she would not come. This was probably a poor little victim of polygamy, and it seems to me that polyandry is a less evil, for the polyandrous woman does not marry till she attains years of maturity, and she has a good deal of control over her own destiny. The Baltis are much poorer than the Ladakhis; the amount of land capable of cultivation by both races is limited by the means of irrigation, though in Baltistan, owing to a lower altitude and a slightly moister climate, it is rather greater than in Ladakh, but the Mohammedan religion encourages polygamy, and though the Baltis may be unable to afford to practise it as a rule, yet the very early age at which the girls are married tends to over-increase the population, while there is no monastic system to help to keep it down. One evidence of the difference between polyandry and polygamy is that while in Ladakh it is very rare to see a woman in rags, the reverse is the case in Baltistan.

It was very hot till the sun disappeared behind the mountains soon after five; what a change since the morning! When I was breakfasting at six o'clock outside my tent the ground was white with hoar-frost, and my fingers were quite numb, and poor Ramzana, who sleeps on the ground under the outer fly, to ward off the visits of jungle-dogs, etc., was nearly frozen. The scenery had changed too and resumed all its former sternness. The Alpine plants, which were very numerous at Changa, gradually disappeared as we left the Chorbat La behind; a lovely pink and white larkspur had enlivened a part of the way, but here the ground was as bare as in the Indus valley.

I heard the grinding of a mill-wheel, and went to look at it, as I had never seen a mill at work, though I had passed many. The mill-house consisted of two tiny low-roofed rooms, the inner one being built on the top of the walled enclosure, in which the wheel was suspended, with the water running over it. In this inner room a basket narrowing towards the bottom, in which a spout was fastened, hung from the ceiling over the grindstone, which revolved horizontally close to the floor, and a woman regulated the flow of barley from the basket into the hole in the grindstone by putting her hand over the spout; the flour spread out over the floor, and she swept it up into a dish. Four women were sitting in the outer room, one of them with a baby in her arms, which she was feeding with some of the raw flour, and then she got some water, mixed it with the flour and drank it. They don't trouble much about cooking in these parts. The women made room for me to sit down on the floor, and were very friendly.

The next morning I went to look at what the guide-book calls a fortified mosque, and after a rough scramble

and walk across a nerve-shaking bridge, made of three poplar poles and some boulders, beheld merely a little square, new-looking building with a veranda in front on the top of a high rock, on which there were some fragments of the walls of an old fort. I was back by nine o'clock and even then it was very hot. Soon afterwards I was sitting outside the tent mending stockings (which suffer sadly on these rough roads), when two men jumped over the wall and squatted in front of me; one of them showed me some pimples on his cheek, and the other asked in Hindustani for some medicine for him. Cockle's pills seemed to be the most suitable remedy and I gave him two. He made signs to know if he was to rub the spots with them, but I opened my mouth wide and pointed to it, and then to the pills and to his mouth, and he swallowed them and went away. Another man immediately took his place, an ear-patient this time, but whether the complaint was deafness or ear-ache I could not make out; bathing the ear with very hot water was what I advised, and I showed him with a stocking how to do it and told him to follow the prescription three times a day, at six o'clock, twelve o'clock, and again at six. "Twelve o'clock?" he said, and pointed up to the sun, and as I thought it might be somewhere about noon I nodded, and he departed to his own house. I never knew the time exactly without a fatiguing amount of calculation, for I had an eccentric bracelet watch which I bought for ten rupees in Srinagar, as I did not want to bring my gold one on this trip. The new watch was guaranteed for two years, and for two weeks did excellently; but at the end of that time the long hand got loose, caught the short hand in its embraces and stopped it, leaving the seconds hand to whisk busily round, but this, though

useful in photography, does not give much help in telling the hour. By vigorous shaking, the long hand was induced to leave the short hand alone, and took refuge under the edge of the case, where it remained out of mischief ever after. The little knob for winding came off next, so I put it carefully in the inner pocket of my purse—and lost it. Now, I thought, the watch is done for, but not a bit of it; I had brought a watch-key which happened to fit the hole where the knob had been, so on it went merrily, but in the meantime it had contracted a habit of stopping for a rest and then going on in an hour or so, or else gaining as much in a day, which made me think my servant very unpunctual when I told him to call me at five and he didn't come till nearly six by it. One night I gave it its usual sixteen turns, and found the next morning that it had only gone for half an hour. I was sure I remembered winding it, but perhaps had not done it enough, so I turned and turned—a hundred and ten times without coming to the stop, and then tired of the business; this time it went for three hours. After that I wore the watch-key on a chain round my neck with my other keys, and every time I looked at the watch gave it a wind. Now that the knob was lost I could not set it, and it requires such a lot of calculation to know what o'clock it is, if you have to deduct four hours and twenty minutes from the right time, or to add three hours and ten minutes to it, and to remember whether it was yesterday or this morning that it was fast or slow, and I never was any good at arithmetic. But in this dear country, innocent of trains and engagements, the clock is a very unimportant piece of goods.

A tamasha was got up for my benefit in the bagh, and

when all was ready I went out and sat in my arm-chair with a semicircle of a score of men sitting on their heels facing me; the orchestra consisted of a clarinet, a pair of kettle-drums and a big drum, and to their music two or three men solemnly danced, the steps being principally standing on one foot and showing the sole of the other; no women admitted, but a row of them stood looking on over a wall. Soon afterwards we all adjourned to the polo ground, where I was conducted to a seat on the grand stand (the top of a wall), with a crowd of men on my left and of women on my right, all seated at a respectful distance. My fame as a medical practitioner had preceded me, for as soon as I took my place a boy asked for medicine for his mother; no symptoms were mentioned, but I thought it safer to have some idea of the complaint before prescribing. After enquiry, Aziz Khan told me it was eating eight pounds of apricots a day. I promised the anxious son something for the patient if he would come to the bagh afterwards, and advised him to give her barley boiled in milk in the meantime; I suppose he thought that was the prescription for he did not appear again. The polo went on merrily, four on a side, much better played than at Leh; the winners drew up their ponies in a row facing the orchestra and bobbed their sticks up and down in time to the music, uttering cries of triumph; they then wheeled round, galloped to where I was standing and dismounted, and I, through Aziz Khan, made them a little speech congratulating them. There was the usual cry for backshish, which was promised to them, and a demand for medicine from one of the competitors who had been thrown from his pony and exhibited his scratched and bleeding face. I told him to wash it well with warm water, such an

unheard-of application for the skin in this country that its very novelty made it at once acceptable. All the people then asked for medicine without describing any symptoms (*they* are of no consequence), and I heard Aziz Khan say that the Miss Sahib was not a doctor, and that they must go to the hospital at Skardo.

The people here are Shiahs, a kind of unorthodox Mussulman sect, much despised by the stricter order, for Mohammedans rival Christians in their hatred of each other when they differ on religious matters. Aziz Khan told the women (who do not wear veils) that it was very bad of them, Mussulmans as they were, to come to the polo match, that in Astor, Gilgit, and Hunza if the ladies went to the bazaar or to polo "they would have their heads cut off, same as the Pathans." "But," I remonstrated, "you wouldn't cut your wife's head off if she went to the bazaar." "She doesn't go to the bazaar." "But if she did go, you wouldn't do it," I persisted. "Yes, I would," he said, looking very fierce. "But look at English mem-sahibs, they go to polo and to the bazaar." "Oh yes," he replied, "but they clean, they good clothes. That's another bandobast." This was not a convincing argument, for ladies of the zenana have often beautiful dresses and jewels, but it was merely a way of saying "*autre pays, autres moeurs.*" In Peshawur, Aziz Khan's native city, where women are kept in very strict seclusion, jealous husbands cut their wives' noses off to spoil their attractions. I saw two women there who had been mutilated in this way, and the American missionaries at Rawal Pindi told me they had four cases in their hospital at the time I was there. One of the mission ladies is very clever in making artificial noses, and to some extent can repair the damaged beauties.

CHAPTER XIX.

KHAPALLU.

AUGUST 8TH. It is two marches from Puyan to Khapallu, and as they were long and difficult and likely to be hot, I got up each morning at three o'clock and breakfasted under the stars, the moon in her last quarter shining brightly through the trees. In the fresh, cool air, when the sun gilded the mountain tops and the silvery light of dawn lay in the valleys, softening the harsh outlines and stony bareness, and giving an almost unearthly beauty to the scene, the morning rides were delightful beyond description. The road from Puyan followed the sands of the river at first, but soon climbed a cliff, and here and there was laid on poplar poles projecting from its face and forming an erection, called a parao, no worse to walk along when it is well built than a path cut out of the rock, but rather awe-inspiring when out of repair. The poles are sometimes allowed to reach the last stage of rottenness before being renewed, and one here or there might easily break under a little extra weight, letting the traveller drop into the river, generally hundreds of feet below. A Tibetan would jump like a cat to save himself as the path crumbled under his feet, but a European, not being to the manner born, might find it awkward. It is of course out of the question to ride along a parao, and

one was so bad, steep and narrow, about three feet wide, and ending in rough broken steps, that the riding ponies had to be steadied by two men to get them over safely, and required a good deal of urging to make them face it at all, accustomed as they are to bad roads. No laden ponies ever come this way, and the tents and baggage had to be carried by coolies. During the winter and on to April and early May the river Shayok, which we followed all the way from Puyan to Khapallu, is so much shrunken in its bed that there is plenty of space to march between it and the foot of the cliffs; but this is not possible after the snows melt, and we had sometimes to climb up 1000 to 2000 feet to avoid it, and get behind the precipices which hem it in. It was a pleasant variety to wind in and out through the shady orchards and barley fields of several large villages down near the river, each with its well-kept polo ground, for during those two days the road was the worst, on the whole, that I had yet travelled over. On the top of one very high place we heard the coolies chanting far below as they climbed, each carrying 60 or 70 lbs. weight on their backs, though I was glad of the help of two men, one dragging me up at the end of a stick, and the other hoisting me by the arm.

I intended to stop at Dau, the first stage from Puyan, but the little bagh there was so unbearably foul and evil-smelling that I pushed on to the next village, Lankha, much to the delight of the coolies who were coming on to Khapallu with me, as this made a much better division of the marches for them. At Lankha I camped in a nice clean little terraced field shaded with apricot trees, high above the river, and with a clear stream foaming past. The villagers hurried out to look at me, and lined the walls with heads; Aziz Khan used always to chase them away,

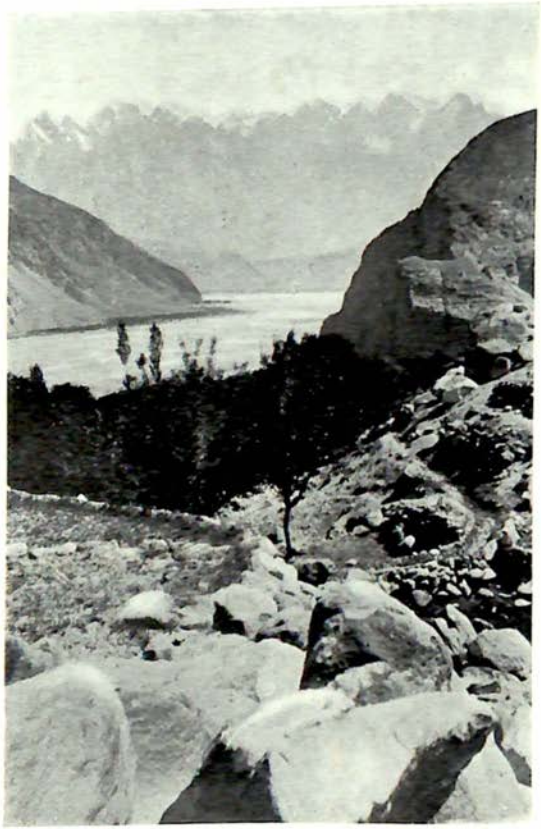
but I told him that if it was any entertainment to them to watch the European woman eating her bit of mutton or drinking her tea they were welcome to it, and I was interested in seeing them. The usual presents of apricots were brought, but Batta had the most of them, as neither my men nor I could eat many with impunity. Some travellers eat as many as 200 in a day, picking them from the trees as they pass.

The new road from Lankha to Khapallu avoids the village of Sirmu which the old route passed through, and crosses a high cultivated plateau behind it, cutting off a long corner; here, some miles back from the river and a thousand feet or more above it, a great many boulders were scattered about with rounded water-worn holes in them, some the size of a tennis-ball, others large enough for a man to sit in: these holes were almost invariably in the sides of the stones, rarely on the top. In the cliffs of the Indus and Shayok they are seen in process of formation by the swirling of the current against them. There are many cairns on the rocks here and all along the Shayok, but the Baltis do not crown them with boughs and prayer-flags as the Ladakhis do, though they probably did so when they were Buddhists centuries ago.

As we neared Khapallu the scenery became more and more magnificent, a wonderful range of needle peaks touched with snow came in sight, and a triple-pointed mountain, white as low as it could be seen, closed in the nullah (noted for its ibex), where the united Hushe and Saltor streams run down to the other side of the Shayok from the great Mustagh or Karakoram mountains. From the plateau there was an easy descent of three miles by a broad, sandy road to Khapallu, a cluster of villages

nestling in orchards, stretching along the riverside and up two nullahs, and scattered in hamlets on the opposite bank, and we soon reached the camping-place in a pretty bagh, clean, sweet, and shady. I was sitting waiting for the tents when I was told a sahib said salaam, and immediately he came and introduced himself. I had passed his camp at Lankha, and he had heard when he left Leh a week before that I was on the road in front of him. He was the only European I had seen since leaving Khalatse nearly a fortnight before. On comparing notes of the journey over the Chorbat La I told him of the fight at Goma Hanu, which surprised him very much, as it is unheard of in these parts to meet with incivility in the villages; but he said the Goma Hanu people are very jungly and notorious thieves, and that as I was the first woman to camp there alone they would not understand the situation. He said that my best plan would have been to write a letter describing all that had passed, give it to the pack coolies who were paid off there, and tell them it was a chit which they were to give to the first sahib they met on their way back to Skirbichan. He added that I must of course make a complaint to the Commissioner and the Wazir Wazarat at Leh. He was on his way to the Hushe nullah and would have to cross the river on the zak or goatskin raft, which is the only ferry here.

Courage, skill, and endurance are required by a sportsman in this country. If he wants to get his ibex he must first find out the place where they feed between 4 and 8 a.m.; then he must start at 2 a.m. next day to be above the ground before they arrive there, climbing among rocks on the sides of precipices and along the face of cliffs where he has to cling by his finger-tips



THE SHAYOK AT KHAPALLU, By the Author.

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THE RANI'S HOUSE, KHAPALLU. By the Author.

to any chance projection, or passing on goat tracks over treacherous slopes of shale, taking care not to let the game have sight or scent of him; and he may have to repeat this for several days before having a chance of a shot. Think of it, ye gentlemen of England who live at home at ease, and perhaps go out at 10 o'clock to shoot a few hand-fed pheasants, which will hardly rise without having stones thrown at them, and you call that sport! A real sportsman told me that, when on an expedition high above the snow line (18,000 feet in this country), his shikari would not allow a fire to be lighted for three days for fear of frightening the game, and during that time he had no hot food, not even a cup of tea or cocoa; the bread and biscuits had run out, and he had nothing but cold meat to live on.

The day I arrived at Khapallu (pronounced Kup'-a-loo), a crowd of women gathered round the tent and seated themselves on some poplar logs to discuss in low tones what they saw; many of them were very pretty, as may be judged from the photograph, which however does not do justice to the colouring of the group. The poorer wear dingy white woollen clothing, but the well-to-do have purple, blue, yellow, or green coats of cashmere reaching to the knees; silk or cotton pyjamas to the ankle, tight and wrinkled, of some other bright colour striped with white, and a veil or sheet (chuddah) contrasting with both, thrown round the shoulders or folded on the head to protect it from the sun; in this clear air and brilliant light the mixture of colours looks gay, never gaudy. They set off their good looks with the wreaths and coronets and cluster of flowers they fasten on their little felt caps. The women dress their hair as the Kashmiris and Ladakhis do, parted down the middle and

plaited in a dozen or more tails lengthened with black worsted to reach nearly to the knees at the back, where they are caught together with a black worsted tassel sometimes ornamented with gilt cord. No bangles or anklets are worn; the bare feet are thrust into leather or embroidered slippers for outdoor wear only. Both men and women wear a good many silver rings set with a single turquoise or cornelian, and as often as not these are strung on a cord fastened on the breast of the coat, especially if the wearer is at work. An embroidered purse is also fastened in this position by the women, who wear in addition silver amulet cases set with turquoises and cornelians sewn on the cap or hung round the neck, and necklaces made of lumps or beads of these stones. They often stain their nails and the palms of their hands with henna, which I never saw done in Ladakh.

The men are dressed in white, with a piece of drapery under the right arm and thrown over the left shoulder, and white skull-caps, sometimes with a bunch of flowers tucked under the edge, their black hair hanging in waving locks. When they glided across the bagh among the golden sheaves, or sat in groups under the trees, it looked like a scene in an opera or a pastoral play.

When my camera was produced a winsome young mother with her baby on her lap shut her eyes tight, calmly determined to face her fate, but unwilling to see what was going to happen. There may be the same fear of the evil eye here that there is in Bethlehem, where a native of that town told me it was believed that anyone who was photographed would go blind. He shared in the belief himself till he was compelled, to his great terror, to have his portrait taken at the Chicago Exhibition (where he was in charge of the Bethlehem

KHAPALLU WOMEN. By the Author.

SULTAN BI AND THE CHOWKIDAR. By the Author.

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stall), and found that no evil effects followed. In Southern India a member of a shooting party photographed an old woman who came to the camp, and when she got home her goat had died. The villagers at once declared that it was a case of the evil eye, and would give no supplies to the shooters, who had to leave the place.

But to return to Khapallu. A young woman tried to have a little conversation with me in Urdu, and I saw a good deal of her afterwards. She was an ayah of the little Rani's, Sultan Bi (Madam Sultan) by name. I gave her a very old, very much patched and mended, pair of riding-gloves, and showed her how to put them on. It was funny to see her glee as she waved her hands, bending her fingers as if she were playing castanets, and making signs that she would eat her dinner in them. She was pretty, and gaily dressed in green pyjamas, a dim purple coat with very long sleeves, wrinkled above the wrist and with an opening at the elbow to thrust the hands through when working or washing, leaving the spare piece to hang down; a bright yellow chuddah over her shoulders, and a felt skull-cap trimmed with poppies on her shining and neatly plaited black hair, with her keys tied to her hair tassel. She wore a small silver nose-ornament like a button, which she gave me in exchange for the gloves. She often used to come, carrying a two-year-old rajah in her arms, whom she taught to say "salaam, mem sahib"; but he could only muster up courage to do so when my back was turned.

CHAPTER XX.

LIFE IN KHAPALLU.

THE camping-bagh at Khapallu, 200 yards long and 30 yards wide, is one of a series of irrigated terraces stretching from the hillside down to the river Shayok, a mile and a half off. It is bordered by poplars, and one half of it is laid out in grass, the other in barley, now nearly ripe. In the middle is an apricot orchard, and my tent was pitched in its shade. The road runs along one side a few feet above it on a terrace, and on the other side there is a footpath to a pretty house at the far end, where the "little Rani" lived, the junior wife of the Rajah Mohammed Sher Ali Khan, uncle, stepfather, and guardian of the ruling rajah—a Hamlet-like relationship.

The relationships in this family are rather complicated, and it was a long time before I understood them—if I do so now. The late Rajah Hatim Khan (father of the present Rajah Nasir Ali Khan, a youth of eighteen) lived in Jammu for some years, and married there a woman of much inferior rank. By her he had two sons, Rajah Spindia and another, but they could not succeed to the family possessions as their mother was not of the rajah class. They were both elderly men when I saw them in Khapallu. When Hatim was very old he married a sister of the Rajah of Skardo, now known as the big

By the Author.

THE RAJAH NASIR ALI KHAN OF KHAPALLU, BROTHERS AND ATTENDANTS.

By the Author.

THE RAJAH MOHAMMED SHER ALI KHAN OF KHAPALLU.

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Rani, and had a daughter and one son, the aforesaid Nasir Ali Khan. Hatim died when this boy was very young, and the principal men of Khapallu requested Mohammed Sher Ali Khan, brother of the late Rajah, to marry the widow, the "big Rani," and thus qualify himself to act as guardian to his nephew. This he did a year after his brother's death, though he had married two years previously the daughter of the Rajah of Shigar, the "little Rani," who had now to sink into the place of second wife. She had one child, a very pretty boy two years old, Sultan Bi's nursling. The big Rani has had by this second marriage one daughter and three sons. They are the handsome boys with rather girlish faces standing in the photograph beside their step-brother, Rajah Nasir Ali Khan, who is not quite so refined-looking as they are. The Rajah Mohammed Sher Ali Khan was in Srinagar at this time on State business, and came to see me when I returned there in the following autumn. Poor man, his eyes filled at the sight of the photograph of his boys, whom he had not seen for two years, while the youngest of all, the little Rani's son, had been born since he left home, and I, most unfortunately, had not taken his portrait.

Drew remarks that the Balti rajah and wazir class are better looking than the ordinary Baltis and have a different cast of face; this is observable in the accompanying photographs in which the rajahs may easily be distinguished from their attendants. They claim descent from Alexander the Great (called Sikander in the East). General Cunningham says that in 1830 the Rajah Daolut Ali Khan gave him the names of 67 of his ancestors who had succeeded each other down to that date. The Baltis value good blood and pay great respect to those who have it.

The big Rani was not a favourite with the villagers, who said she was like a "bazaar lady,"—the equivalent for "Billingsgate fishwoman" or "*dame des Halles*," but they spoke very highly of the little Rani. Neither of these ladies ever went outside her own door, in daylight at least, though it was whispered that they sometimes put on old clothes and slipped out to the village tamashas which were held at midnight twice a week in the summer. I was not admitted to see them, as their husband was in Srinagar, and no one else could give the necessary permission. I was told that the wives and married daughters of the rajahs in Baltistan are not allowed to see father, mother, brother, or sister, to whom they are practically dead as soon as they go to their new homes; a more strict seclusion than is practised among Mohammedans in India, where a woman may receive the members, male and female, of her own family, but may not eat with any man, not even her husband.

The moulvie (Mohammedan priest or mullah, as he is called in India) went three times a day to recite prayers to the little Rani, whose only other occupation or amusement was smoking her hookah and doing beautiful embroidery, for which she drew her own patterns. The big Rani made her an allowance of food and clothes for herself and her child, 2 lbs. of flour a day, two sheep and six chickens a month, and 100 rupees (£6 13s. 4d.) a year for dress. The young Rajah Nasir Ali Khan went to see her nearly every day, which his mother forbade, so as he had to pass my tent on his way he told her, while I was in the village, that he came to see me! What excuse would he have after I went?

On that first afternoon as I was talking to Sultan Bi I saw through the trees a crowd of white figures approaching along the road; she said it was the Rajah coming to see me,

and she and the other women at once disappeared. The Rajah Nasir Ali Khan, accompanied by several brothers, old and young, a dozen servants and about thirty villagers, came to the tent, where he and I had chairs outside, all the others squatting round us on their heels with their knees up to their chins and long white sheets drawn round them, looking exactly like Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves popping their heads up out of the jars. Before sitting down the Rajah held out his hand to me with five rupees in it. "What am I to do with this?" said I to Aziz Khan. "Touch it and say salaam," he replied. It was the usual dali, or offering to a visitor, and is not intended to be accepted.

This unenterprising young man had never been to Srinagar nor even to Skardo, less than 70 miles off, the capital of Baltistan, though a great many of his villagers had been in India; he did get an Urdu newspaper and could tell me a little about the expedition to Lhasa, and had heard of the war between Russia and Japan. The Baltis are of Tibetan origin and speech, but they have been Mohammedans for centuries and care nothing about the Lamas. In reply to a question, he said there were no remains of Buddhism, the ancient religion of the country, near Khapallu, but when I showed him a photograph of the Chamba carved in the rock at Maulbek, he and his brother, the Rajah Spindia, both told me that there was one like it at Sadpor, a few miles from Skardo. This was important information, for there was no mention of any such thing in the guide-books, and Mr. Francke had not heard of it or he would have called my attention to it when he asked me to look out for Buddhist remains in Baltistan.

The Rajah's hookah was brought to him while we were talking; it was of local manufacture, the part containing

the water being a piece of a yak's horn, 8 inches long, mounted in brass beautifully chased; the brass chillam or cup to hold the fire was handsomely wrought, and a number of small iron chains were laid on the embers to prevent them from falling out. After he had taken a few puffs it was offered to Aziz Khan, who, however, does not smoke, and then to the attendants. Before going away he asked me to go to a polo match to be played two days afterwards.

The women, who had scattered when the Rajah came, soon returned after he had gone; they sat watching me write for some time, and then one of them came close to me, and coughing, with fingers pressed on her chest, signified that she wanted a cure. "Hot water," I said, *bahut, bahut garum pani*, and then there was a perfect chorus of coughs all round. I had not any medicine for coughs, as it happened, and had only brought a very small stock of drugs in case any of my servants should be ill. I stayed on for a month at Khapallu, unwilling to tear myself away from the delightful place with its fine air, good water, grand scenery, and pleasant people; but I greatly regretted that I had not a large and well-stocked medicine chest, and some skill in using it, for scores of patients came every day for relief, and what could one do with a small bottle of castor oil, one box of Cockle's pills, and a few quinine and phenacetine tabloids? The nearest doctor, a native, was at Skardo, nearly 70 miles off, over roads that are often no roads, merely beds of water-courses or goat tracks, or lying along giddy precipices, or on the sandy banks of the river, where every step is a toil; imagine sick people having to undertake such a journey! Aziz Khan was very good at making poultices and prescribing such simple remedies as hot water inwardly and outwardly,

and tea for bathing the eyes; he put a gelatine poultice, a thing I had never heard of, on a woman's chest, and his skill surprised me till he said he had been servant to a doctor in Peshawur Hospital for three years, and had had some of the mild cases handed over to him for treatment. A good many people with sores came to the camp, but he never allowed any very bad ones to be shown to me. There were a good many cases of cataract and goitre, amongst the women especially, but the most numerous complaints were inflamed eyes from want of washing, and indigestion from eating too many apricots, the principal food at this season; hot water was prescribed for these so often that at last it came to be quite a joke with the villagers. It was a great joy to them when they were allowed to have a pill or a dose of castor oil, and envious were the looks of those not so favoured.

A man came one day carrying his little daughter on his back; she had had small-pox the previous year and had gone blind. He was most unwilling to believe the case was hopeless, and came a second time to ask if nothing could be done, if I did not think the doctor at Srinagar could cure her sight; but I felt it was useless to encourage the idea, and he went away very sorrowful. A poor child of five had been suffering from infantile paralysis for three years and had never walked; I advised the father to take him to Srinagar Hospital which had an excellent surgeon, Dr. Neve, at its head, but he said he could not, and considering that the distance is nearly 300 miles to be done on foot or by pony his reply was not surprising. A medical mission is greatly wanted here; the population of Khapallu is 5000, and there are many villages beyond its borders but within easy

reach which are equally badly off, so there would be plenty of patients, and it is a charming place for a missionary to live in.

On the afternoon that the polo match was fixed for, as I was sitting enjoying the sunshine and sweet air, and waiting for a message from the Rajah to summon me when he was ready to begin the game, I heard some merry shouts, and on looking through the snowy trunks of the poplars in the direction they came from, saw a group of figures dancing in a circle, treading out the golden barley. The whole scene, the grey-green foliage, the silvery haze, the soft blue sky, the dancing figures, were like a picture of Corot's. I was in Arcadia here in this beautiful bagh with its vista of trees, the shadows flickering on the grass, the continual murmur of falling water, the flower-bedecked people sitting about, with the little children in their quaint caps playing round them. The apricots dropped, tap, tap, on my roof when breezes shook the boughs, and offerings of flowers were sent to me every day. It was perfect staging for Shakspeare's comedies, which I now made my daily reading.

About half-past four when the shadows were lengthening a messenger came to take me to the polo ground, about half a mile off, along a narrow lane winding through the village and then amongst fields and orchards. The ground, which is 300 yards long by 40 wide, is grassy and well kept, surrounded by fine trees in a frame of mountains. A wall of boulders, four or five feet high and three feet thick, forming a convenient sitting-place for spectators, runs along one side and one end, the other side and end being surmounted by a terrace on which there is a pavilion or grand stand. A stone pillar on

the long wall marked the middle of the ground. The band—three big drums, three pairs of kettle-drums, three clarinets, and a huge brass trumpet—was in the middle of the ground and greeted me with a loud blast, afterwards taking up its position on the end terrace. I was then conducted to the pavilion up a rough flight of steps of the usual oriental type, and had to be dragged up the first boulder, in ignominious contrast with my stately reception. Chairs were placed for me and the Rajah; his little brothers squatted beside me, and thirty or forty attendants sat on their heels round us. The walls were covered with men and boys, but not a single woman was to be seen; at the polo at Puyan, where there was no rajah to overawe them into the proprieties, there were a great many. The scenery in front of me was magnificent, the sun throwing his nearly level rays on the peaks of the sierra which bounds the valley.

The hookah was handed round, and then the Rajah mounted his pony and began the game by throwing the ball in the air and striking it with his stick while at full gallop. There were four players on each side, who all started from the same end, a plan that perhaps explains why fatal accidents at polo are almost unknown in Baltistan. The sticks were of the same shape as hockey sticks, about three and a half feet long, roughly finished, the shafts not even straight in some, a few having a strip of cloth round the butt to improve the grip. The ball was sometimes sent from one end of the ground to the other in two strokes, and never once in any of the games I watched did I see a pony struck by a stick though the pace was tremendous, and it seemed often as if nothing could save the animals from dashing themselves against the wall: but a safety-valve was provided

at each end in the shape of a road at the corner, up which they were turned if they could not stop themselves in time. The ponies, from twelve to thirteen hands high, were excellent, and seemed to enjoy and understand the game as much as their masters. There were a good many loose stones lying about, and an irrigation channel crossed the ground awkwardly, but there was no stumbling.

The band played at the beginning of each game, and at the end of the match (which lasted fully an hour without change of ponies), the winners drew up in front of it, as at Puyan, all dismounting except the Rajah, who was one of them, and a triumphal air was played in which the long trumpet, which is only used on special occasions, took a part. This trumpet telescopes for convenience of carriage.

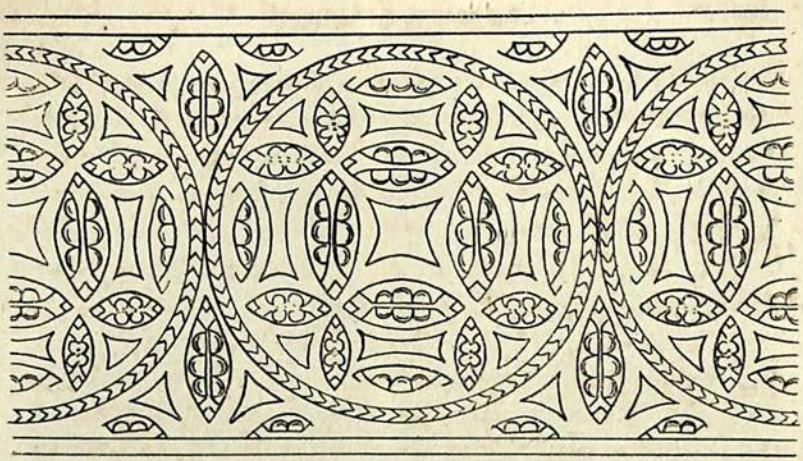
When the music ceased the polo players came to the grand stand to be congratulated, and on my taking leave Aziz Khan gave the orchestra backshish, and told the Rajah I would send him a pagri from India, which I was afraid might not be taken in good part, though my servant assured me it was the proper thing to do. I need not have feared, for that evening the Rajah sent to ask for backshish for the polo teams, he himself and his two elder brothers being amongst them! Two messengers had come in succession; Aziz Khan dismissed the first one, but when the second appeared he came to me very angry, saying they were such jungly people, and that if I gave any money I should not send the pagri. The oriental mind is unfathomable to the European. Fancy an English gentleman getting up a cricket-match in honour of a foreign lady, and then asking her for a tip!

Drew, in his *Jummoo and Kashmir*, p. 381, gives a long and minute account of polo, the national game of the Baltis, and its introduction by them into neighbouring states. In India it was played in the time of the Mogul Empire, but died out there, and survived only in Baltistan and Manipur; from the last-named country Englishmen in Calcutta first got the game and adopted the sticks used in it; they have modified it a good deal, not for the better in every respect, some people think. It is funny to hear Englishmen say, "But the natives play polo so queerly," quite ignoring the fact that the natives invented it centuries ago. Drew gives the translation by an anonymous correspondent of the *Times*, 12th June, 1874, of a Latin description of polo in the *History of the Reign of the Emperor Manuel Comnenus*, which shows that it was played at Constantinople in the middle of the twelfth century, and was even then considered an old game, and was practised by the emperors themselves. The stick used is described as "terminating suddenly in a rounded space, the middle of which is filled up with catgut strings, fastened together in the manner of a net"; it must have been something like the racquet used in lacrosse.

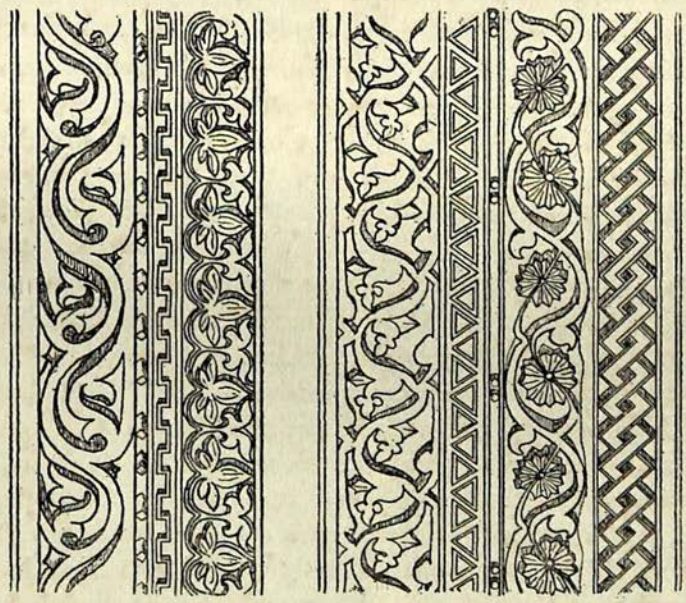
There are three mosques in this part of Khapallu, with carved door and window frames and panels; the geometrical designs are fairly good, but the floral ones are poor, though they are carved in such bold relief that the general effect is handsome. One morning the lumbardar took me to a mosque, and as soon as I produced my drawing materials a crowd gathered in the narrow lane and squatted down as if they intended to spend the day there. It was rather distracting; the lumbardar officiously held my paper and counted the patterns for

me, babies squalled, a boy close behind me sniffed vigorously every five seconds, a hen as large as a pigeon cackled loud and persistently, out of all proportion to its size; now and then there was a yawn of portentous weariness as the minutes and quarters and half hours passed without any sign of the mem sahib stopping. At last the lumbardar tired of holding my paper, and went to the edge of the veranda to crack jokes with the people, and as he was the great man of the village they laughed at every remark; when he had finished his stock he came back to me. At the end of two hours I was going away when the usual demand—backshish—was made. I opened my wallet and two or three inquisitive noses were immediately poked into it, so I turned my back, determined that the poverty of the contents should not be seen—a handkerchief, a note-book, and a two anna piece which refused to be found at first, and when it was at last fished out and handed to the moulvie he looked as disgusted as I felt. Another day when the usual demand was made I said to the lumbardar, "If you will pay me five rupees for the medicine I have given the people I will give you backshish for the mosque." He must have thought that this would be a losing business for him, for it was never mentioned again.

The mosques in Baltistan are like those in Kashmir, without dome or minaret, the sloping roof surmounted by a structure resembling a belfry. They are entered from a veranda, usually raised a few steps above the road; the veranda and walls are often decorated with carved panels. The Great Mosque at Khapallu has a gallery across one end for women, one half of it purdah or screened, so that the occupants may not be seen. The



PANEL OF VERANDA CARVED IN WALNUT WOOD.



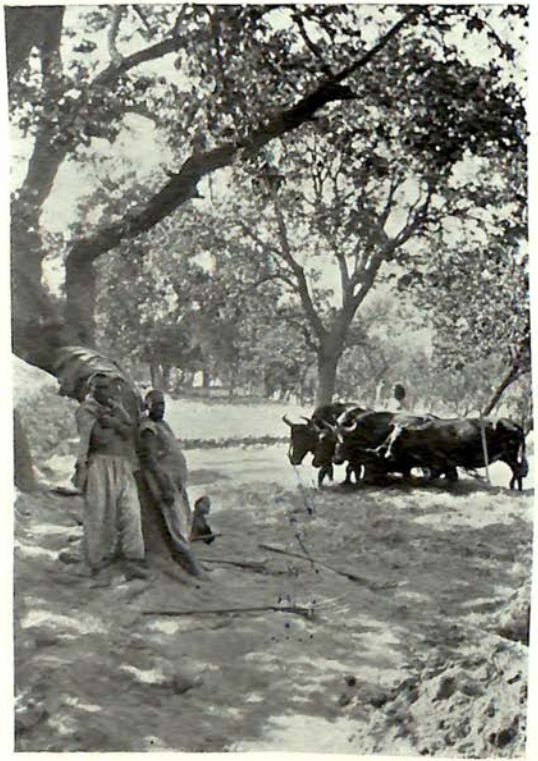
WINDOW FRAMES CARVED IN WALNUT WOOD.
IN A MOSQUE AT KHAPALLU, BALTISTAN.

Drawn by the Author.

recess towards Mecca is lined with carved wood, with the remains of colour on it, and a staircase in a corner leads to the roof whence the call to prayer is made morning, noon, and evening. The spandrils of the arches in the veranda, and the spaces above them, are filled in with what is known in Kashmir as panjiar or cage-work, made of short strips of wood.

There is an old killa on the top of a high and steep hill just behind the polo ground, which I went to see with Aziz Khan and the lumbardar; it took two hours slow but steady climbing to go up, and half an hour to come down. The killa had been so completely destroyed that hardly a vestige of the walls remained, and the rough stones of all sizes and shapes, of which they had been built, were thrown in a sort of cascade down the precipitous cliffs; over these we had to clamber while they shook and slipped under our feet, and care was required in clinging to the rocks, for some were so brittle that I could break off flakes of them with my fingers. Near the top we had to proceed along an *arête* of stones with a sheer drop of 1200 or 1400 feet on each side. With practice my head had become much stronger for great heights, and certainly, a fortnight before, this climb would have been impossible for me.

Just below the very top pinnacle a small level space has been cleared and a little mosque built on it; a room belonging to it contained a rock mortar, the only relic of antiquity to be seen. There are remains of eight or nine rooms on the highest peak of the rock, but the tiers of houses which once covered the hillside have been thoroughly demolished. The whole of the population used to be compelled to live inside the walls of these Tibetan castles, and it is only within the last forty or



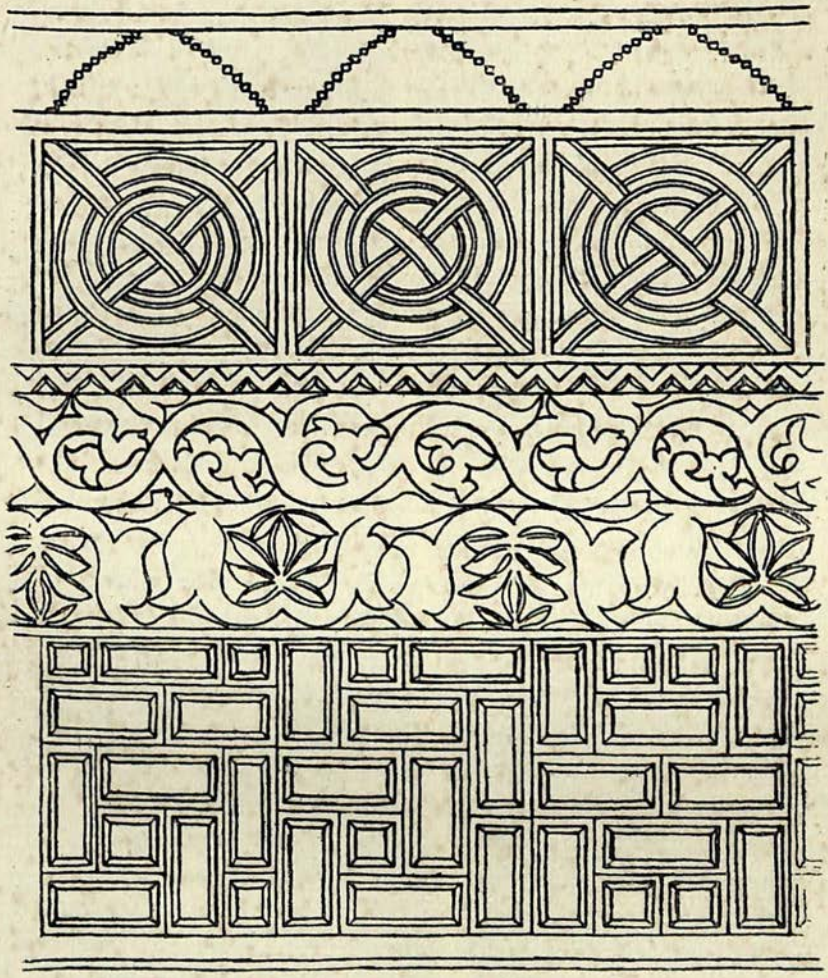
By the Author

HARVESTING, TREADING OUT THE CORN.

To face page 220.

By the Author.

MOSQUE AT KHAPALLU, WITH PILLARS AND CARVINGS IN WALNUT WOOD.



WALNUT WOOD PANEL IN THE VERANDA OF A MOSQUE AT KHAPALLU.

Drawn by the Author.

fifty years, since internecine fighting between the petty States has ceased, under the rule of the Maharajah of Kashmir, that the people have been allowed to build themselves houses in the valleys on a level with their fields.

The view from the killa was a reward for the climb; the nearer mountains form an amphitheatre a mile and a half wide, and ending in two rocky headlands a few miles apart, villages, fields, and orchards spread out on its floor, while on the opposite side of the river the endless ranges of the Mustagh close in the scene. The flat roofs of the houses were now covered with apricots, peaches, and mulberries drying in the sun, and the harvest-work was going on busily, men and boys, donkeys and zhos treading out the corn, while the women winnowed the barley on wooden shovels without handles. The barley is pulled up by the roots here as at Khalatse, but it is bound up in sheaves and left standing in the fields, as a second crop is not raised, though the elevation (8000 feet) is about 2000 feet less than it is there, but there is much more snow here, as well as rain. There were slight showers every day or night for a week or more during this month, and the moisture made the air soft and pleasant to the skin, and prevented it from roughening and cracking, as it does in the extremely dry air of Ladakh. This was said to be a very cold and wet summer, but the rain was not sufficient to wet the footpaths, and the heat in the middle of the day made it a little uncomfortable for walking.

Tamashas were held two or three times a week, beginning at 10 p.m. and ending soon after midnight; hundreds of people came in from neighbouring villages to attend them, and marched from one bagh to another, tom-tomming and cheering as they went.

A few days after my arrival a many-coloured row of figures came along the road, raising the knees high so as to bring the feet to the ground with an emphatic stamp: it was the boys' school headed by their little Indian master, coming to show off their accomplishments before me. They were drawn up in a row, thirty of them, according to their size, a grown man at one end, a child of five at the other; they went through some simple drill, and then called out their numbers in Urdu first and afterwards in English, but they could not get further than three in the latter language, so number four had to begin at one again, even this proving too much for one boy, who called out "three," missing out two, and got a cuff from the master in consequence. They were dressed in their best, some in blue or crimson velvet coats trimmed with gold lace, their caps and pagris adorned with bunches and fringes of flowers. It was hinted to me that they expected to be photographed, so I took them. One tiny rajah had on an immense red velvet waistcoat coming down to his knees, which I saw one of the polo players wearing afterwards; it was a hot day and the poor child looked melted in it. A bigger rajah boy came to the camp nearly every day with some companions on his way home from school, brought me flowers, and then went to watch my tiffin being cooked. We could only exchange a very few words, and one day when conversation languished I drew his portrait and Sultan Bi's—not the least like them in the face, but as buttons and ornaments were put in right they were delighted.

Patients continued to come in shoals; a crowd from another village arrived one morning before I was up, and Aziz Khan felt pulses and looked at tongues, but could do

little or nothing for the sick, some of whom were seriously ill. A good many had goitre and cataract, which are rather common complaints in Baltistan. One day I was taking Batta out for a walk, and had not gone far when a woman stopped me to show me her child's eyes, which were in a fearful state of inflammation from sheer want of cleanliness. I took her back to the camp, and bathed the eyes with warm water. It took a quarter of an hour to make them even tolerably clean, but the poor infant, who could not bear the light on them before, was evidently relieved even by this small amount of treatment. I then washed her well with soap and water all over, and told the mother that that was to be done every day till the baby was married. She listened to the prescription with great gravity, and promised to attend to it. She complained of her own eyes being weak, so I washed her face too, scrubbing it with sunlight soap as if I were scrubbing a floor, to the huge delight of the crowd looking on, for of course all these operations were done in the open, and my camp was a sort of Earl's Court for the district, where the ways and wigwams of strange tribes could be studied. I told the woman to wash her own hands (she held them out helplessly for me to do), and she had enjoyed the face washing so much that she did it all over again, amid much laughter from the spectators.

An elder brother of the Rajah's had been suffering for two years from skin disease, and came to consult me about it; I advised him to go to Skardo Hospital, but he showed the same reluctance to do so that others had done. I found afterwards that the doctor there was a native Kashmiri or Indian, and on that account the people distrusted him though he had had a proper medical training, but they would rather go to a European who had none. An English

doctor told me he had been in the hospital one morning while on a visit to Skardo, and only three or four patients were there, but on looking at the book of cases in the afternoon he saw that all sorts of fictitious names had been filled in, so it seems as if the people's want of confidence was well founded. In India and Kashmir the natives are so prone to dishonesty and extortion that they can rarely be trusted to do work of any kind without constant European supervision. The Baltis, on the other hand, are very honest, and although I often left pencils, knives, scissors, etc., lying on my table outside the tent when I went for a walk, nothing was ever taken.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE INDUSTRIES OF KHAPALLU.

I SENT a coolie to Skardo, the nearest post-office, on the 8th of August for my letters, and it took him just a week to walk there and back, 135 miles. He brought a pile of papers,—*Times*, *Spectator*, *Punch*, etc., which were sent to me every week during my travels, and as the news in the letters from home was good I decided to stay a fortnight longer at Khapallu, to be present at a great festival which is only held once in 36 years, and is attended by all the people for many miles round. After many consultations with the headmen of the neighbouring villages as to when they could come and bring their polo ponies to take part in the processions and games, the Rajah fixed on the 3rd of September as a convenient date for all. It was a piece of great good fortune for me to be in Khapallu at the time, as no European had ever seen this tamasha, and it was the crowning inducement of many to prolong my visit to this charming valley. The summer climate is perfect, rather cold at night and not overpoweringly hot in the day, when a cool breeze, a real zephyr, gently stirs the leaves; beautiful walks, endless wood-carvings to draw from, the village people a constant source of interest and amusement, nearly 70 miles from a post-office (to which, however, I could send letters almost every day by people who were going to

Skardo), about 350 miles from a railway station, no cares, no worries, and a few good books to read; what more can mortal woman wish for, and would she not be very foolish to leave such an earthly paradise sooner than she need do? Even without the prospect of the tamasha, the temptation to an indolent person like me to rest where I was, was great. Besides all this the food was good; delicious peaches and apricots dropped round my head, the mutton was excellent, the vegetables were plentiful and good, the chickens less stringy than usual, and my cook made the best of them all. The little Rajah who haunted the kitchen tent sent a humble petition that the Miss Sahib would stay for three months, so there was another reason for not going away. The servants were pleased too, which was a great matter, and one evening when I was walking out and stopped to look at the view, Subhana, who was in attendance, remarked, "Miss Sahib, Khapallu good place." That evening the setting sun had left a rosy flush in the sky, when the young crescent moon rose softly from behind the hill, two zhos wound their way homewards across the bagh, the light from the camp fire showed dusky outlines of figures in pagris; the sound of prayers being chanted in a neighbouring mosque, and the fainter echo of them from another in the distance, chimed in with the rush and tinkle of the streams flowing down to join the river.

It is intensely hot at Skardo in August, and the mosquitoes there and on the Deosai Plains, which it takes three days to cross, are maddening, while here there was a remarkable absence of insect life—only a few small flies that did not touch the food, some extremely long-legged and clean-looking spiders, and a handsome winged beetle with fans on his head, who came droning into the candle-

light at dinner-time and caught his claws in the table-cloth. I felt that I could never be so happy in my life again, and that the charm of solitude in these regions, which several men I have met out here have succumbed to, had laid its spell on me also. It is quite safe to sing the praises of Khapallu, for even when balloons come into ordinary use for travelling, the high passes which must be crossed to reach it will be an effectual barrier against its being over-run with trippers.

The villagers are busy in their fields all summer, the men, unlike the Ladakhis, taking their share of the labour, and in the winter they employ themselves in brass and copper work and wood carving. At this season of the year there is no opportunity of seeing them following these arts, but I was shown some of the tools they use in metal work. The bellows are two goatskins, each with a short thick wooden pipe inserted in the neck and tied firmly, an iron nozzle protruding from it; at the other end of the skin there is an opening 18 inches long, with a stick fastened along each edge, a loop for the thumb on one stick and a loop for the fingers on the other, so that each skin can be worked by opening and closing one hand. A shallow hole was made in the ground, and a jar like a little flower-pot laid on its side with its small end to the hole, in which some charcoal was put; a low mound of earth was built over the flower-pot and a heavy stone put on the top, with a smaller one at each side to keep it in position; the nozzle of the bellows was pushed into the flower-pot, and a boy sat down and worked the goat-skins with each hand alternately. A chisel was put in the glowing charcoal, made red-hot, and hammered on a stone which served as an anvil. The only other tool was a pair of strong pincers, but judging from the fineness

of the chasing the men do, they must have some very much smaller ones. I bought the only specimen of their work that they had—a very handsome water-vessel for a hookah through which the smoke is drawn; it was made of copper in the shape of a yak's horn, eight inches high and ten inches in circumference, with broad bands of beautifully chased brass round each edge.[1] When I took it to Srinagar I found that no one there had ever seen one the same, hookahs which were sent there from up-country having the vessel of yak-horn instead of copper.

At my usual morning *levée* of patients I always impressed upon them the necessity of cleanliness, and pointed out to them that I had not had a single case of a man suffering from bad eyes. It is a religious duty enjoined in the Koran on the men to wash before going to daily prayers at the mosque, and though the Baltis are not very scrupulous in observing it, they do not entirely ignore it. The Prophet was a wise man in many of his regulations, but he would have been wiser if he had included women in this particular, and would have saved an immense amount of suffering; they are commanded to say prayers in their own house, but are not required to wash before doing so, and until the boys are of an age to go to the mosque, and the girls to take some pride in their appearance, they are allowed to neglect cleanliness altogether. The Rajah Mehemet Ali Khan, aged two, had his face washed for the polo match which I attended when I first came here, but afterwards he grew dirtier and dirtier every day, till at the end of ten days, when I was washing the eye-baby's face, which now looked quite fresh and rosy, I showed the ayah, who was watching the process, the difference between it and her little Rajah

[1] See photograph, p. 114.

Sahib's. I told her that children in England have a bath every day (this boy had two ayahs and never a bath at all), and that people there think a rajah a great person, but that I was going to tell them what dirty faces the Khapallu rajahs had. She was very much amused, not being civilised enough to feel it a disgrace, and when I added, "*Maila* (dirty) ayah, maila Rajah," she went into peals of laughter, but the next day the poor maila Rajah came with his face partly clean. The Rajah Nasir Ali Khan asked me to have tea with him at his house after it had been cleaned, but a fortnight passed without it having been done, and Aziz Khan, who was in it one day, said he had to hold the end of his pagri over his nose all the time, for it was as bad as that awful gompa at Skirbichan where I was so overcome. I decided that if the invitation to tea ever came (which it did not, fortunately), I should have another engagement, though it would have been difficult to invent one here. A shooting sahib once went into the Rajah's house and afterwards wrote to him telling him how dirty it was, but even this delicate hint had no effect. I should have liked very much to see a house such as the lumbardar's (the poorer ones are mere hovels), but after this description of the Rajah's it did not seem advisable. The tea itself, too, might not have been an unqualified delight, though it was Lhasa tea costing 10s. a pound. What is sent here is moulded in the shape of a cheese; a small piece is cut off and boiled for half an hour with a quantity of sugar, some salt, barley-flour, and doubtful butter, and then churned. The Rajah once offered to send me a cup of this stuff, but Aziz Khan tactfully told him I was not a great tea-drinker, that it was generally cocoa I asked for, and I felt grateful to him for getting me out of a difficulty even at the expense of perfect accuracy.

Although the Rajah's house was so unsavoury inside, the village lanes and roads are very well kept, as indeed they are all over Baltistan and Ladakh. The system of sanitation in these countries is far in advance of that in many places on the continent of Europe, and might be adopted with advantage by them where at present much that is offensive is encountered during the course of a walk. There are no pigs in Western Tibet, as there are in Lhasa, to fill the office of scavengers.

Aziz Khan, being a strict Mussulman, was shocked with the way the unorthodox Shiahs of Khapallu neglected the precepts of the Koran as to secluding the women and clothing them properly. He often told the men that they did not know how to manage their "ladies," because they allowed them to go to the tamashas and did not give them any new clothes though they themselves were comfortably clad. They replied that they knew it was not good to let them go to the tamashas, but as for the good clothes they worked in the fields all day and never went to other villages, so they did not require any. I thought I had seen the worst possible rags at Puyan, but some were as bad here. One of my eye patients, a *buddh*, the name for a person who is immensely old, 60 or 65, had some tatters hanging about her such as I never saw the like of, the upper portion very *décolleté*, (which is not the fashion in Asia, everybody being covered up to the throat), no cloth left below the arms, and the pyjamas in bits two inches square, each hanging by one corner to its nearest neighbour. She was a widow whose only son went to India and died there, so I told Aziz Khan to arrange with a tailor to make her a suit of clothes. "Well, Miss Sahib, if you do that, hundred men will come for clothes." "Never mind," I

said, "they can be told that they must work for them." The next day she did not come to have her eyes done, —she was sitting at home watching the tailor at work. When I passed through the village in the evening someone called out and touched me on the arm, and there was the old lady smiling and salaaming, the centre of an admiring group, resplendent in a white coat and red and white striped pyjamas with a strip of apple green let in down the seams—this magnificence costing the sum of two rupees. The tailor's bill came afterwards—4 annas. Next morning when she came she proudly showed off her garments to the other women and offered me a dali of half a dozen eggs and a basket of apples, but as she was so wretchedly poor I merely touched them and thanked her for them; she was not to be denied and pressed them on me and then on Aziz Khan, who did as I had done, patting her kindly on the shoulder as he spoke, and it ended in my taking them and giving her a backshish. I had a shoal of applicants for clothes afterwards, of course; just as I was going out one day, a man asked me for a hat, *one* hat, for the tamasha. "Oh no," I said, "you must work for it," and walked away leaving him gazing after me, and when I looked round he was still gazing in stupefaction that his considerateness in asking for one hat only should be so disregarded.

Such glimpses of the life of the people as a passing stranger can obtain show a curious state of matters in many respects. The zemins (or farms) are very small, the largest consisting of 100 kunals (there are 8 kunals to the acre; therefore a kunal is half a rood), for which the rent is 50 rupees (£3 6s. 8d.). Wheat and tares (sown together), barley and turnips are the principal crops, and tomatoes, marrows, spinach, carrots, and some other vege-

tables that I do not know the English names of, are grown. The people are very poor owing to the size of their families; Aziz Khan said that a couple who had a farm of one kunal had ten children,—"Very bad bandobast!"

The Balti men go to Simla and other places in the frontier provinces in great numbers in search of work, and being cheerful and industrious are much liked wherever they go. There were 400 men from Khapallu in India in 1904, and most of those who were then at home had been there and could read and write Urdu. They send much of their hard-earned wages home to their families, and the Maharajah's munshi, who has an office here, said that 5000 rupees in money orders had come into the village in 1903. The post-office is a great institution in all the countries ruled by the Indian Government (India, Burma, Ceylon, and Western Tibet), the cheapness of the rates for postage making it possible for the natives to use it freely. Return post-cards cost a halfpenny, *i.e.* a farthing for each half, letters under a certain weight are a halfpenny, and the system of money-orders is perfectly safe, the money being paid into the post-office and the payee advised of it without a form being enclosed. Millions of men from the countries named are at work far from their families (many being even in South Africa), and send money home regularly for their support. I was asked to write to the authorities in Srinagar petitioning for a post-office in Khapallu, one of many requests, such as to write to the Viceroy for a grant of land in the Punjaub; to the Wazir Wazarat for an increase of salary for the little schoolmaster who received 15 rupees (£1) a month and had 40 pupils, while his predecessor had 20 rupees and only 25

scholars; to the Kodak Co. for a camera for the Rajah, with instructions in Urdu, etc., but I could not always see my way to consenting. The natives seem to think that a British man or woman can do anything and command anything—a great compliment to the nation, but somewhat embarrassing to the individual.

The lumbardar (Balti, *trampa*) is paid 50 rupees a year by the Maharajah; the chowkidar does not get any salary, but the zemindars make him an allowance of barley, vegetables, and fruit. The lumbardar is elected by the *drabs*, village council (or Panchayat, as it is called in India, from the number of councilmen, panch, 5), which regulates the affairs of the community, and decides amongst other things how long the water-supply is to be turned on daily, a frequent cause of dispute. It also decides how much each man must contribute towards any fine which may be levied on the village by the Government for a breach of the law, such as murder, theft, or revolt. The lumbardar is officially responsible for all trade arrangements, but the settlement of disputes among the villagers is a private matter. The councils sometimes met near my tent, the men sitting on the ground in a circle, and as they all talked at once in their loudest tones and nobody seemed to listen it was surprising that any business was done at all.

The rajahs, and possibly the lumbardar, are the only people who have any bedding, the rest of the population following the general practice in Baltistan and Ladakh of sleeping in a kneeling position on the floor, the knees drawn tightly up under the body, the hands palm downwards on the ground, with an inch or two of space between them to accommodate the nose. The floors are earthen, with a little dry grass sprinkled over them. The people crowd, a great many together, in one small room without a

window and with the door closed, and this arrangement along with the very small proportion of their bodies that requires covering in the position described, is certainly an economy in bedding, which they say they are too poor to afford. One cannot imagine anything less restful, but custom, and especially the custom of generations, makes what is extremely painful to one nation quite comfortable to another, as witness the Japanese mode of sitting which no European can endure for more than two or three minutes. The Tibetans always sleep, even when in hospital, in the clothes they wear during the day, according to the custom of the East. Is it not written in the 22nd chapter of the book of Exodus, "If thou at all take thy neighbour's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it unto him by that the sun goeth down: for that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep?"

CHAPTER XXII.

HARVEST AT KHAPALLU. CHAKCHANG MOSQUE.

I ATTENDED one of the frequent midnight tamashas which were held in a large terraced field, with another above it on which the spectators sat. The chowkidar took me to a good place for seeing, and cleared a space for my chair by pushing bundles about which opened and disclosed a face; the bundles were women wrapped up in their chuddahs as the night was chilly. Sultan Bi, her pretty pleasant countenance set off by a fringe of flowers hanging from under her white felt cap, was next me, and beyond her the little schoolmaster in a pale blue overcoat lined with white lambskin worn over a red suit, a pink handkerchief tied cornerwise over his head making a quaint frame for his long hooked nose and soft sprouting beard. A dance was going on, a number of men in white with the lumbardar leading, going round the circle waving gaily painted wooden scimitars. A great many people were seated on the ground round the dancers, others standing and moving about behind; a large fire of wood in a brasier on a high tripod lighted the scene on one side, and two oil torches did so dimly on the opposite side, one motionless torch-holder in white standing out like a marble statue against the surrounding blackness of the mountains. The moon had just sunk behind the overhanging peaks, but her rays,

reaching upwards, made the floating cloud islands near her look like burnished silver against the dark blue of the sky. The fire flared up now and then making visible a sea of faces, and then sank again so that the dancers were hardly distinguishable. The chowkidar made wild rushes at the people, calling out "Ya-la-la-la-la," as fast as his tongue could utter it, holding a stick straight out in front of him as if he were going to poke someone in the eye, and then a cheer ran round: this was the *claque*, an organized institution in this country. The lumbardar clapped his hands in time to the music as a signal to the people to do so too; the applause all seemed to be arranged. The orchestra was as usual a collection of drums and clarinets, and a huge brass trumpet was sounded occasionally, the same that blares when a great personage (like me, for instance) enters the polo ground. After a while another band from a neighbouring village came marching in, playing a tune independently of ours, and then a second arrived; but they all settled down together, and when the massed bands began to play I felt as if the drumsticks were being beaten on the drums of my ears, but as I was told that the tamasha was very big on my account I had to appear to enjoy it. Another cresset was lighted, so that the illumination was now quite brilliant. A man came and said something to Sultan Bi, who began to wriggle violently inside her chuddah and at last handed out a garment, which he took away; a second time he came, and after more wriggling another garment was parted with, and as she only wore two or at the very most three, it seemed as if there could not be much left, and indeed she signified as much. A man was to be dressed as a "lady" (no woman takes part in the dances), and presently the pink pyjamas I knew so well appeared amid much laughter. Two boys

wore green and pink bodices and white skirts reaching to the ground, and, at the end of each figure, whirled round and made "cheeses." A soloist gained great applause, though to the uninitiated his performance seemed to consist principally in standing still. Now and then the chowkidar came to see how I was getting on, pushing the bundles about if he thought they were too near, and beaming upon me; he has been perfectly "sweet" ever since he got a beating from Aziz Khan for bringing bad wood. It sounds rather brutal, but really a beating to these people is like a dose of castor-oil to a naughty child—they are as good as gold after it, and as the beatings are merely one or two taps on the arm with a stick as a hint of what might happen, they are not taken very seriously. The chowkidar was promised another for bringing a quantity of watered milk (watered milk in Arcadia!), but was let off on condition that he brought some good enough to make butter of next day.

The Baltis being Mohammedans are water-drinkers, so there were no jars of chang handed round as in Ladakh, the only refreshment being the hookahs which the Rajah and the lumbardar had brought with them, and which were re-lighted at intervals with burning embers tossed on to the clear space of ground at our feet, and picked up by boys, who ran with them to the smokers. The tamasha went on till two, when I heard the revellers laughing and singing as they passed my tent on their way home. It is a most innocent form of entertainment, with none of the objectionable features of the Indian or Egyptian nautch.

At a village about a mile and a half from Khapallu there is a large Shiah mosque, the Chakchang, which I went to see, accompanied by Aziz Khan and the lumbardar. It is beautifully situated on a high rock, with

lanes and cottages at its foot. The villagers had seen us coming, and we were soon surrounded by a crowd, many of them asking for medicine. On getting to the door of the mosque a moulvie barred the way, refusing to allow me to enter. Aziz Khan harangued him to no purpose, till at last he told him that I had been in many large mosques in India and Srinagar, and that he was a very jungly man, and that I would report him at Skardo. While the dispute was going on I let the people look through my field-glasses—a sure way of making friends in the East—and very soon another moulvie came up, and on hearing Aziz Khan's threat said I was to be admitted. At the top of the steps I took off my chaplies, but as I had leather socks on over my stockings the dirty floor of the veranda had no terrors for me. Between the pillars of the veranda there were some beautiful specimens of panjiar work, but so high up that it was impossible to photograph them. The outer walls of the mosque were almost covered with walnut panels, finely carved in a great variety of patterns. When I remarked how beautiful they were, some of the men in the crowd which had followed me, said they were very old, 200 years old; but one cannot trust the dates given here. Some of the panels had been restored, but the new work was as deeply and carefully cut as the old which it copied. Many of the same patterns[1] are seen in all the mosques I visited in Khapallu, but the variety was the greatest at Chakchang. The moulvie said that the mosque was built about 400 years ago on the site of a Buddhist temple which had been destroyed by the Mohammedans, and that a brass plate over the door covered a document stating the age of the building. There was an inscription

[1] See p. 219.

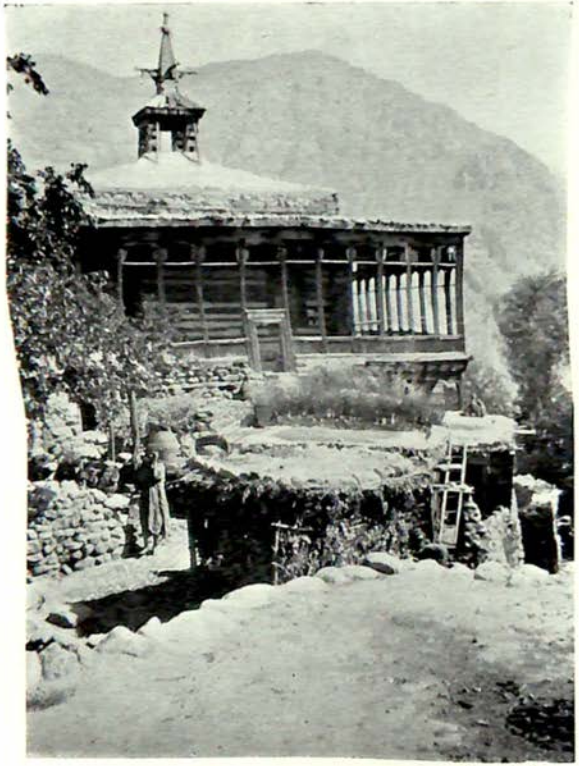
on a beam in the veranda, which he said referred to its history, but I doubted if he could read it though he seemed to do so. It would be interesting to have a translation of it by some person knowing Arabic (the language, I believe, in which it is written) who could be relied upon, for it might throw some light on the question as to when Mohammedanism was introduced into the country.

The moulvie objected to my going inside the mosque, and a ragged old crone seated herself on the very middle of the doorstep to show that if I entered it would be over her body. However, the windows being low and wide open, I could see everything there was to see, which was nothing but some handsome walnut pillars, one lying on the ground broken in two, just where it had fallen, apparently. I felt rather relieved that I need not walk over the dusty, earthen floor strewn with dry grass, the haunt, no doubt, of much insect life of a kind that one cannot always avoid in this country.

From the wide veranda, whose floor was partly covered with fruit laid out to dry, is seen a stretch of the Shayok river and its gorge, bounded by the lofty sierra, which is such a striking feature in the scenery here.

Early next morning I took my camera over to Chakchang, but the people had got over the shock of seeing a European woman in their village for the first time, and were quite friendly, allowing me to clamber up and down the stairs of their flat-roofed houses while I looked for a good point of view for a photograph of the mosque. When they found that my motive was admiration, not desecration, they were pleased and interested in my photos and drawings.

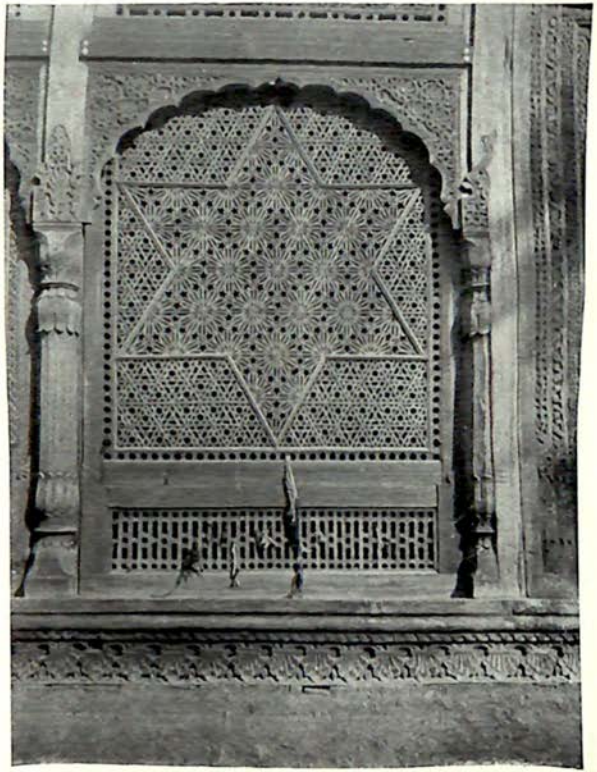
A few days afterwards the bagh was all in a bustle owing to the arrival of the camp of Major Wigram, the



By the Author.

MOSQUE OF CHAKCHANG,
WITH FLAT ROOFS OF HOUSES IN THE FOREGROUND,

To face page 240.



By the Author.

PANJIAR, OR CAGE WORK, IN WALNUT WOOD, FROM A
MOSQUE IN THE VALE OF KASHMIR.

Secretary of the Kashmir Game Preservation Department, who was passing through the country on an official tour, and it was only then that I realised what an interesting and exciting affair it is to the natives when anyone, especially a Government official, camps here. They had got used to me now, and there were no longer the equivalents to cheap-trippers and special excursionists coming from the neighbouring villages and sitting round, dressed in their best, gazing wide-eyed and making whispered remarks about the strange phenomenon which had suddenly dropped into their midst. Major Wigram rode into the bagh surrounded (rather to his disgust, I fancy, for he gets a surfeit of this sort of thing) by drummers and trumpeters, who afterwards adjourned to a large walnut tree close by, and under its shade three or four men solemnly "cooried" (Scottice, crouching in a sitting position) round to the music in honour of the new arrival. The walls of the bagh were lined with people absorbed in watching the cooking and washing and comings and goings in the rather large camp, for there were munshis and chuprassis and shikaris besides the ordinary servants. It was the first time I had heard my own language, except in Aziz Khan's broken English, for three weeks, and I was interested in having some news of the outside world more recent than a month old, the most interesting item being that our troops had reached Lhasa at last. There had been a rumour in the village that a Lama had gone from Lhasa to Simla, and that a Chinese regiment had been sent to take part in the expedition, but there was no confirmation of this.

On asking what was the day of the month I was told that it was at least the 23rd, if not the 24th (of August), Major Wigram himself not being quite sure without looking

at his papers, so I had lost one day if not two in my reckoning. I forgot to ask what o'clock it was, not that it would have been of any use as far as my watch was concerned, but Aziz Khan's guided the camp, and I fancied it must be an hour or two slow, for it seemed to get dark so uncommonly early, and I was deadly sleepy by nine o'clock.

The other camp was struck at five o'clock in the morning, and the bagh soon subsided into its ordinary quiet. How still it was that evening; the moonlight lay in silvery pools and splashes among the black shadows of the trees, the breeze whispered in the poplar leaves, a large moth flitted up and down over the little rippling stream, hawking for its food and flashing when it came into the light; the villagers must be asleep, resting before the midnight tamasha. Now a child passes along the road singing a dance tune, stops to cough, and hopelessly loses the key; then there is the distant tap of a drum, and a clarinet plays a lively air, the first few notes being like the skirl of the bagpipes before breaking into a reel or strathspey, and immediately the whole place is astir with the sound of laughter and chatter.

Once a week a "nimaz," Mohammedan service, is held during a great part of the night in this bagh for the benefit of the Rani; one night it went on so vigorously that the servants thought it would keep me awake; but as I happened to sleep for ten hours and never heard it, it must have had a soothing effect. It was according to the Shiah rites, in which prayers are used that are not in the Koran, and part of it is merely slapping each shoulder alternately with the opposite hand and ejaculating, "Hussain, Hosein," the names of two of Mahomet's grandsons who were murdered and are rever-

enced as martyrs, though they were only the sons of a "girl" (daughter) of his. The Shiahs hold that Ali, Mahomet's son, is greater than the Prophet himself; they don't need to wash their faces before prayer, only their hands, and during nimaz their arms hang by their sides instead of being folded properly across their breasts; their "ladies" are not veiled, and are allowed to go to tamashas and to polo matches in villages where there is no rajah to overawe them. There are a few of the Nur Baksh sect here who are more orthodox, using the Koran prayers only, with their arms in the proper position, and Mahomet is their prophet; they, as well as the Shiahs, follow the orthodox rules as to food, but the freedom they allow to the women, and the circumstance that the moulvies go to the tamashas, for which they would get their heads broken in Aziz Khan's country he declares, makes them looked down on by strict Mussulmans. My servant would not go to the mosques of either sect, but spread his carpet on the grass at 5.30 every morning and recited his prayers before I was up, for his moulvie says that if he is away saying them when his sahib may want him it is not good nimaz, and he is absolved from going to the mosque while acting as servant, unless it is convenient to his employer to let him do so. It would make it almost impossible for a Christian to employ a Mussulman if he were obliged to attend five daily services. Another cause of offence with the people here is that they have prayers an hour or an hour and a half later than is prescribed by the Prophet—on such trifles does orthodoxy depend!

One night I stood outside a Shiah mosque watching a service being held on the veranda, which was dimly

lighted by a tiny oil-lamp of stone hung against the wall; Aziz Khan kept saying, "Look that, Miss Sahib, look that; that not right," as the various attitudes were assumed, and when the prayers were ended he began a lively argument through the door with the moulvie and the small congregation, which they took part in while still on their knees.

Harvesting went on for some days in this bagh, in the patch of barley mixed with vetch, 30 yards by 25, quite a good-sized field in these parts. The crop, after being pulled up, was left lying on the ground for several weeks, then piled in a rough stack, and the gleaners set to work; when they had finished, a piece of the ground was cleaned, water turned on it from an irrigation stream close by and spread over it with a wide, toothless rake, and then beaten down with a wooden spade, so that next morning it presented a hard smooth surface on which a sackful of broken straw was spread. A post was driven in in the middle, and the barley thrown down round it; three ponies were tied abreast with a rope which was fastened to a willow ring slipped over the post, and they were trotted round and round, treading out the grain, a fourth pony grazing at hand to take the place of one of those at work, so that they all got a rest in turn. By the afternoon the heap was finished, and the very much broken straw was tossed in the air with a fork made of five prongs of ibex horn fastened to a wooden handle, letting the chaff fly away in the wind; most of the straw was tied up in bundles and stored for winter fodder, the remainder at the bottom of the heap, which had the grain mixed with it, being tossed again and again till at last a fairly clean heap of grain was left, which was carefully winnowed in a

wooden 'tray with three upstanding edges. The women who winnowed were very deft in separating the barley corns from the soil and bits of straw. Two men sitting on the ground beat the remaining heap of straw with sticks (not jointed like flails) to empty any heads that had been left. These processes occupied the most part of five or six days, three or four men and women being at work and half a dozen sitting looking on, the hookah passing round at intervals (a draw of it only lasts two or three seconds, so it is no great interruption), and the result of all this labour seemed remarkably small.

Ramzana started for Skardo on the 21st to get my letters and buy stamps and medicine, and fetch a small parcel of stores which was to come by post from Srinagar. He returned on the 28th but without the stamps (after walking 135 miles!) though I had written a note to the postmaster telling him how many to send, and I was left with only one, which I saved carefully to let my home people know that I was still alive, but that they must not expect to hear from me till I got to Skardo. Ramzana brought some medicines, but the stores had not arrived, and never did, so I had to use butter of sheep's milk (quite good as Aziz Khan made it), and drink brick tea from Lhasa at 5s. 4d. a pound, which had to be boiled for five minutes, and was also good, but had a peculiar, somewhat metallic flavour which one soon gets accustomed to. It is the very opposite of Japanese tea, which must be made with water that is only tepid or it is undrinkable. Through lingering so much on the journey the stores were giving out, and Aziz Khan had to turn his hand to many things, making jam and ink among them. The Delhi and Paisley self-raising flour had to be saved for cakes and scones, and

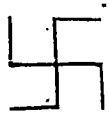
the bread was made of the country wheat flour which is dark-coloured and rather rough, but quite good here when sifted through muslin. In Ladakh it is very gritty.

When Ramzana went to Skardo the people here knew we had hardly any medicine left, and they stopped coming for it. The eye-patients had dwindled down to three—Macbeth's witches—aged crones who always came together, sat down under a tree in front of the tent, and nodded their old heads at each other as they chatted, but alas! I had an accident and a sad disappointment for them; the eye-bath got broken, and they could not have any more of the washings in it with borax and water which they had such faith in. One of the women was almost cured of inflammation, another had cataract on both eyes, so the treatment did her no good, though it was no use telling her so, and these two received the news placidly enough that they must do the bathing themselves at home; but the third and poorest was most indignant at the idea of having to do anything for herself, so it had to be explained to her that if she went to a doctor he would only give her instructions which she would have to follow. The old women are the raggedest and most neglected-looking of any of the people, and do not seem to be taken much care of—even Aziz Khan, who is a kind man as a rule, saying, when I told him to ask one what was the matter with her, "Oh, she too old, she ought to be dead!" And the too old may be sixty! Of course she did not know what he said, as he spoke in English. I told him that the old ladies in England were taken more care of than the young ones, but from the expression of his face that seemed to him absurd bandobast.

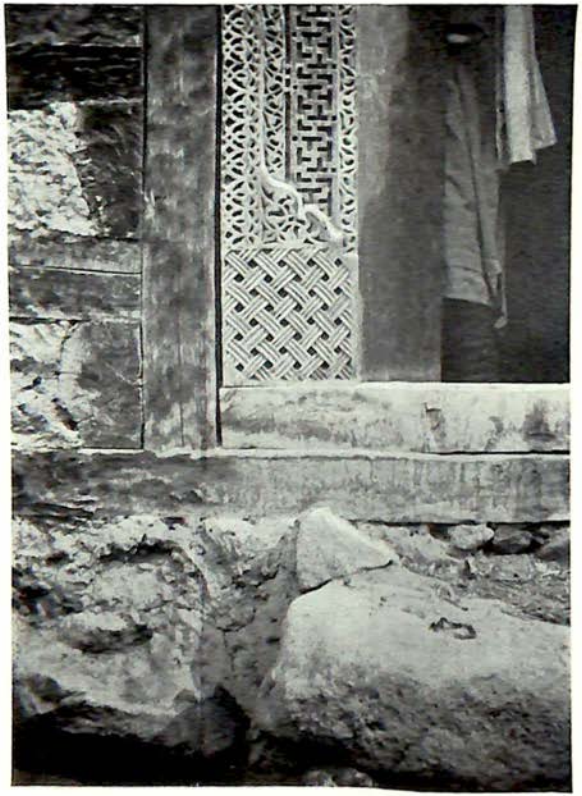
The fruit harvest was over by the end of August, and I was no longer waked at five by the voices of boys and girls as they shook the trees and picked up the fallen peaches and apricots. The walnuts were being gathered and were delicious, much too tempting indeed. There was a fine walnut tree beside the mosque at the other end of the bagh, 16 feet in girth at 5 feet from the ground, which was a meeting-place for the villagers, who sat under its shade in the middle of the day smoking the hookah, with sometimes the tailor joining in the chat as he went on with his work. Another walnut on the way to the polo ground measures 24 feet at the same height, and its hollow trunk would make a comfortable hermitage, if there were hermits in Baltistan.

Occasionally I went into the Rani's garden to gather flowers; it was a wilderness with a beauty of its own, everything growing in unordered luxuriance, tall sunflowers, poppies, corn-cockles, marguerites, asters, nasturtiums, marigolds, and a handsome umbelliferous plant with blossoms six inches in diameter, but no footpaths except where a way had been trodden among the plants which one had to push through; a row of tall poplars all round outside the low stone wall gave a little shade. One morning a nanny-goat lay among the flowers chewing the cud, her yellow-eyed kid standing unsteadily on its mother's side as it heaved with her breathing. An ayah pulled up a parsnip, washed it, and sat down to eat it. The garden door was fastened and the head-servant was sent for to open it; the lock is a wooden bolt, square at the end, with two small holes in it containing two little wooden pegs, which drop into a box on the doorpost and prevent the bolt being withdrawn without the

help of the key—a flat piece of wood shaped to fit, and which is worked about till it pushes the pegs up. The house-door is strongly barred inside with the trunk of a tree, stripped of its bark, extending across it, and when not in use pushed back into the hole in the wall from which it projects. On the outside the door, which is two-leaved, has a chain fastened to each half near the top and padlocked on a hasp on the lintel above, the usual mode in Baltistan and Ladakh. The metal chains and hasps are of local manufacture. The frames of both front and back doors are handsomely carved; there was no possibility of getting complete photographs of either of them in detail, and the camera had to be greatly tilted to get a view of the top of the front door showing the hasp and a cross *fleury* above it. One of the patterns on the back door has a superficial resemblance to the Greek key pattern, but is really a series of



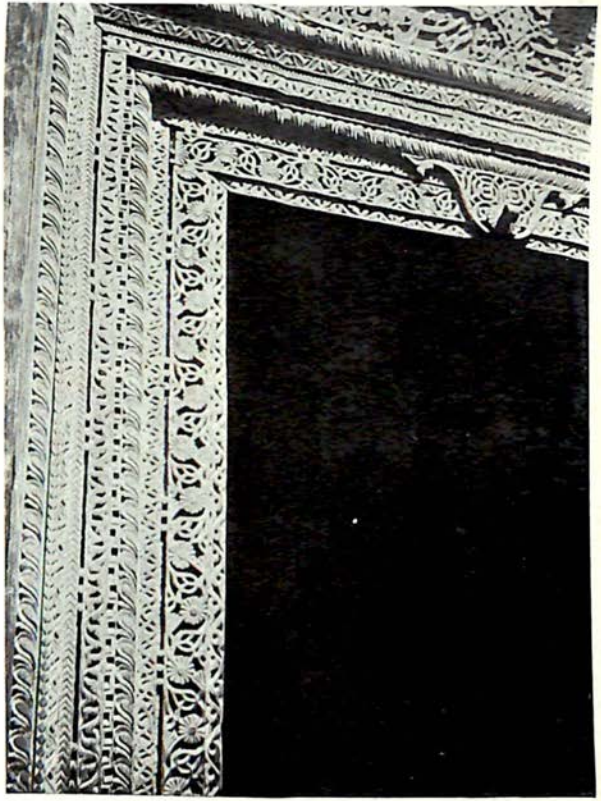
repetitions of the swasti, or mystic cross, a monogrammatic sign formed of the letters *su* and *ti*. The combination *suti* is the Pali form of the Sanskrit *swasti*, which is compounded of "*su*," well, and "*asti*," it is. The emblem means resignation under all circumstances, and is often met with in the wood-carvings of Baltistan. The faith of the Swastika, or followers of the swasti, was founded in India about the beginning of the sixth century B.C., being contemporary with Buddha, according to the Chinese, and was widely spread; there are traces of it in Arrakan on the sea-board of Burma in the east, and on the English coast in the west, the "Three Legs of Man" in the coat-of-arms of that island being, according to some authorities, a modified form of the swasti. Lamayuru in Ladakh is still called Yung-drung-gompa, the Monastery of the Mystic Cross, perhaps



By the Author.

THE RANI'S BACK DOOR, CARVED IN WALNUT WOOD.

To face page 248.



By the Author.

THE RANI'S FRONT DOOR, CARVED IN WALNUT WOOD.

because that was the name it bore before the establishment of Buddhism.

Another link between East and West was the sight of a little girl playing the game known as chucks in Scotland (chuckie = pebble) and as knuckle-bones in England; she used seven stones instead of our five, threw them all in the air, and caught three on the back of her hand, then threw these three and caught them in her palm; she did not know any other variety, so I showed her the Scotch game with its "climb the ladder," "sweep the floor," "churn the milk," etc. It is a very ancient and widely spread game, which has amused the girls of many lands and many eras; it was played by the Romans, and there is a representation of it in a Pompeian fresco.

Some superstitions are also widely spread. One evening Aziz Khan came suddenly upon me while I was busily engaged in performing an ancient rite, which I always make a point of observing when I have the opportunity. I felt rather caught, but would not let him suspect it for the world, so I gravely remarked, "That is what we do in England, Aziz Khan, when we see the new moon; we bow to it nine times, and then turn the money in our pockets; so that we may have some more given to us before the month is out." (As he had all mine in his charge at the time I had to omit the latter part of the ceremony.) "Do you do anything of that kind in your country?" I asked. He looked rather sheepish. "When we see the new moon we look at gold," he said, gazing at the ring on his finger, "and then we get some before the next new moon."

Sultan Bi had a pack of European cards in her hand one day, and at my request she and three men showed me two of the games played in Baltistan, which are of the simplest description. The cards were dealt round against the sun,

not with it as in Europe; the players followed the suit of the first card thrown down, the highest card taking the trick, and whoever had most cards at the end won the game. The second game was the same, except that the cards were piled in the middle instead of being dealt, each player drawing one to decide who was to begin, and then pushing them back into the pack, after which each drew one in turn and played as in the other game. Sultan Bi saw my packs of patience cards, and asked to be allowed to show them to the Rani, and came back with the request that I would give her one for the maila Rajah, so I offered her two specimen cards, but oh no! she wanted the whole of them. I was having tiffin, and Aziz Khan, who was waiting, was indignant, and told Sultan Bi that the Miss Sahib used them herself every night when she had no man to talk to (and he might have added, no woman either). She hung about as if she could hardly believe in the refusal, but I was firm. My precious little patience cards! The very suggestion of parting with them was a shock, and I spent the afternoon in washing their faces, just to feel that they were still in my possession. But that poor Rani, I was sorry for her, a close prisoner, never allowed to go downstairs even in her own house except when she went by stealth in disguise to a midnight tamasha, never a walk or a ride in the light of the blessed sun. Sometimes when going into her garden I passed through the house, as there are doors at both ends of the passage, its floors sprinkled with withered grass, and having the appearance of a badly kept cow-house; it felt like passing through a prison or a place where a corpse was lying, the stillness was so deadly. One day Sultan Bi pointed up to a carved wooden casement which was standing open, and said the Rani was there; a curtain waved, but no one could be seen. I asked to see

some of her embroidery, but she could not let me do so without the Rajah's permission, and he was playing polo.

"Little Mary" is inclined to be rampageous in this country, and no wonder, for the food largely consists of uncooked dough and unripe fruit; the harvesters' mid-day meal is of barley-flour merely mixed with water, and once when the maila Rajah (who was waiting for the big tamasha the following week to have his face washed) was brought by Sultan Bi to pay me his morning visit, he had a large piece of raw cucumber in one hand and a green apple in the other, gnawing each alternately. Fuel is scarce, and very little cooking is done, apricots, fresh or dried, forming a large part of the diet. The camp remedy for indigestion, hot water, is not always appreciated; on one occasion when Aziz Khan gave a man a tumblerful, the patient objected that he had plenty of that at home, on which his medical adviser told him that if he did not drink it he would give him a beating, so down it had to go. Aziz Khan, holding his head very high, marched about giving his orders to the people, who were considerably in awe of him, crediting him with rather more power than he possessed and calling him "Sirdar," a title that sounds quite grand to British ears, on account of the distinguished soldiers who have borne it, but which only means headman.

The Baltis are remarkably polite; if they overtook me on the road they remained behind, and if they were coming down a side path ahead they always waited till I had passed. At first I felt slightly alarmed when I was in a lonely place and men hurried after me or waited for me, and then walked along close to me, but as they smiled and salaamed and tried to talk I soon ceased to have any fear.

When I walked far out among the fields the people often stopped me, smiling and salaaming, to ask "*Thik*" (all right), "mem sahib?" and I assured them that I was *thik;* if they thought I was taking the wrong turning among the irrigation channels, they were eager to show me the way; the children ran after me calling "Salaam, mem sahib," and went into shrieks of laughter at their own daring, and when I turned round and pretended to shoot them with my umbrella, they scampered off and met me at another corner to be shot again.

One night there was a very long service at the mosque near the bagh, lasting nearly two hours, the voices rising and falling in a kind of wail. Usually the moulvie chants the prayers, the congregation following in silence and assuming the attitudes of standing, kneeling, and touching the ground with the forehead as occasion requires, but this time all those present joined aloud in the *rota* or lamentation for the murder of Hussain and Hosein 1200 years ago, beating their shoulders, and even their faces, so violently as to make them bleed. Self-inflicted bodily injury is a common sign of deep grief in India, Kashmir, Baltistan, and perhaps other parts of the East; I have been told that a man on hearing of the death of his father beat himself on the head and left a scar for life, having to be prevented by force from killing himself; a mother on seeing her only son laid in his coffin tore her flesh and ultimately committed suicide; the servant of one British sahib with whom he had been for twenty years shot himself at his death; the servant of another for five years attended his master in hospital during his last illness and died of grief a fortnight after, unable to bear the daily sight of the now unused horse and sword and gun. It is curious and very touching to us of the governing race

to know that this sorrow is rarely or never shown on the death of a native master, though not unusual in the case of a British one, the reason given by an Indian being that the natives treat their servants like dogs, beat them constantly and severely, use bad language to them, and when they are ill never provide for their relief or comfort in any way, while a British sahib will send doctor and medicine and come every day himself to enquire after the invalid. The bad British masters are very few and far between, and the strong appreciation by the natives of the many good ones is a hopeful augury for the future. I have heard it remarked by my countrymen that it is wonderful how the word of a sahib is accepted as final in India, and the Resident in a city in the Punjaub told me that often, when he was on his rounds in the country, natives engaged in a lawsuit would come to him and beg him, for heaven's sake, to try the case himself or get another sahib to do it, so entire is their trust in the truth and honesty of their rulers. It is very humiliating to see, on returning to London (and it is often remarked by those who have lived long abroad), how undeserved this faith is in the case of many of our race at home, and to reflect that the strongest oath a Moor can take—that a thing is "as true as the word of an Englishman," is too often mere satire. When Englishmen are abroad in positions of trust they do, however, live up to what is on the whole the national character.

One morning, while I was writing, the little schoolmaster came and stood by my table, but as he often did so I took no further notice beyond the usual salaam; in a few minutes he startled me by saying in staccato tones, "What —are—you—doing?" for beyond the phrase, "May I go now, sir?" with which he always took leave, he did not

seem to know any English. I complimented him on his improvement in the language, and with the help of a dictionary we had quite a brisk conversation, and he told me many things I wanted to know or to confirm, for Aziz Khan's English is limited, and he often misunderstands my questions, so that it requires an immense amount of hammering to get at the meaning of things, and even then I am never quite sure that the information is correct. However, it was pleasant to find that on the whole it was fairly accurate. I took the schoolmaster down into the fields and got him to tell me the Indian names of plants I did not know and then looked them up in the dictionary. Two have no English equivalent—*kangri*, a tall reed grown also in India, with small white flowers developing into a head of small seeds, which are used to make a kind of porridge; *trambah*, grown in Baltistan, Ladakh, and Kashmir, but not in India, also having a white flower; the seeds are ground for making chupattis, a kind of unleavened bread. A good deal of tobacco is cultivated, but is inferior to that of Kashmir and India.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BIG TAMASHA AT KHAPALLU.

THE big tamasha for which I had waited for several weeks was held on the 4th of September, and we had the prelude to it on the previous day when at noon the throbbing of drums began. A little pink rajah aged six had just come to pay me a visit on his way home from school, and as he answered my questions with solemn nods as to whether we should go and see what it was all about, we went along the bagh and, just outside, found a company in a circle watching two men dancing; a fire of straw and green grass was burning in front of the musicians to keep the hookah going. The "ladies" looking on had made up for the shabbiness of their clothing by the brilliant decoration of their heads with marigolds and corn cockles. After several dances of the usual kind I came away to tiffin, and soon afterwards there was more drumming in another direction and a great scurrying of people along the path before my tent to the piece of green in front of the Rani's house, so I followed. Opposite the front door of the house there is a broad flight of steps leading up to the road which runs along the top of the terraced wall of this bagh, and down these a crowd of people was pouring who seated themselves in a large circle on the ground, with

the musicians on one side; then eighteen men with drawn swords filed down and danced round, the sword in one hand, and in the other the end of a scarf fastened round the shoulder or waist. The swords are old family possessions, but two or three men who had none had to use wooden substitutes. The dancers are gaily dressed in scarlet, blue, purple, and green coats; scarves, white or of some bright colour, and pagris mostly white, all trimmed with bunches or fringes of flowers; the foot-gear was various, top-boots, rusty-looking Wellingtons, dating from the beginning of last century apparently, untanned leather, and coloured cloth, while some performers had none at all. I sat in the middle of the orchestra surrounded by six pairs of kettle-drums, five big drums, two pairs of cymbals, four clarinets with bagpipe tones, and two big brass trumpets four feet long which were blown occasionally, and placed on their mouths on the grass when not in use. Presently there were sounds of a second band approaching, and soon through the trees lining the roads more brilliant colours appeared in procession, swords flashing in the air, and gaily caparisoned ponies caracoling along,—another village come to join in the tamasha. The first set of dancers sat in two circles, leaving the floor clear for half a dozen new-comers who came down the steps sword in hand. There was a terrific drumming of welcome from our band to the other, which immediately reinforced it. One of the new dancers was dressed in a long black velvet coat with deep full pink ruffles hanging from the cuffs, brown pyjamas, green putties, and a yellow pagri with pink flowers; another wore a black and gold brocade coat and immense piratical-looking boots. The carved window places of the Rani's house were full of heads, the roof was covered with people,

Photographed by Miss Christie.

A Sword Dance at the Big Tamasha, Khapallu.

The Swords are laid on the Ground and the Dancers move round them.

To face page 256.

rows of them sat on the grass and more rows stood behind, the men in white with graceful drapery thrown over the shoulder, all decked with flowers; the ponies fidgeted on the terrace, drummers flourished their sticks in great style, the trumpeters blew until their cheeks were like to burst—the whole scene beggared description, and could only be done justice to on the stage of Covent Garden or the Empire Theatre. The dances seem to have some ceremonial meaning; one was very slow to very plaintive music, the sword hanging from the fingers of one hand, the end of a scarf in the other,—then the sword was held behind the back and the right hand raised as if in invocation; in another the swords were laid on the grass point to hilt, the dancers moving round in a sitting attitude, so low as almost to touch the ground, and making as if they were going to pick up each sword as they came to it, but turning away from it with graceful gestures of head and hands till they reached their own, when they grasped it, stood up, and raised it towards the sky. The measure then changed to a very lively one and the swords were flourished round their heads. The Rajah Spindia said it was a kind of pujah or worship, and the men went through it without shoes, as is customary in a religious ceremony in the East. One man looked a born actor, and it could be seen from his movements and expression as he danced that he was looking for a hidden enemy. Now and then there was measured clapping of hands and a curious wavering cheer from the spectators. My neighbours looked at me sometimes to see how I liked it all, and laughed gleefully when I expressed my delight. Then the dancers streamed up the steps, mounted their ponies and came a few yards along the road opposite to where four men stood who fired a volley from old but

well-kept matchlock guns, handsomely mounted with brass and mother-of-pearl. A piece of thick cord was wound round the stock, the end ravelled out a little and lighted; it was fixed in a clip which moved it forward when the trigger was drawn, and lowered it into the powder pan fixed on the side of the gun. The light was obtained in the usual way in Tibet (where matches are a foreign luxury rarely seen), by flint and steel, the tinder being a bunch of dry grass. The steel projects like a blade from the lower edge of a small leather bag, called a chakmak, ornamented with brass, in which the flint is carried, the bag being suspended from the girdle. This slow method of firing a gun causes dangerous and even fatal accidents in shooting, when there is not time to load before a wild beast attacks. Subhana's father was killed by a leopard in Kashmir owing to this cause.

After the firing, the crowd started off up the hill to another village to serve as escort to the temporary rajah, or "lord of misrule," a zemindar (farmer) who would on the following day take the place of the real Rajah, wear his clothes and ride his pony. Soon I heard the music, which had never completely died away, coming very near, and on looking round saw, to my astonishment, a lady walk into the bagh accompanied by the band and followed by an immense crowd. I was having tea and sent Aziz Khan to give my salaam and ask if she would join me; she came at once, and proved to be a countrywoman of my own on her way from Leh to Skardo. In coming down the hill she had fallen in with the procession, in which she was immediately made the leading figure and was immensely surprised, amused and, delighted with her own dramatic entrance into Khapallu, and had no idea till I told her what it all meant. A

great number of people sat watching us over our tea and talk, and very soon the Rajah came to call, and there were more "thieves" than ever squatting round. My new acquaintance, Miss Christie, was at once charmed with this village, and congratulated herself on getting here at such an unusually interesting time. She too had camped at Goma Hanu and had had some trouble; the lumbardar refused to sell her any supplies, and the coolies would not carry her baggage over the Chorbat La, and she had to employ women to take their place. It was bitterly cold, and snowed all the time as she crossed the pass. There had been a considerable amount of rain at Khapallu, principally in the night, and that meant snow on the mountains. We agreed as to the joy there is in travelling alone, and being at liberty to stop or go on as fancy dictates, she, like me, never having had a dull moment on the journey. She had met only two travellers on the road from Srinagar to Leh, and from Leh here, 400 miles in all.

On the second and great day of the tamasha music was heard in the distance soon after one o'clock, and rows of people were to be seen following each other along the irrigation channels on the mountain side as they made their way down to the polo ground. After snatching a hurried meal I set off and came upon Miss Christie photographing the zemindar rajah, who was dressed in the real Rajah's clothes and rode his pony. I hastened on through narrow lanes lined with people, bands of music, men armed with drawn swords, others with matchlock guns or bows exactly the shape of Cupid's bow, relics of the old fighting days. When I got to the polo ground the Rajah, Nasir Ali Khan, had already taken his seat on the grand stand to watch the

arrival of his substitute, and was dressed like one of his own villagers; the walls and terraces were crowded with hundreds and hundreds of men, women, and children, looking out for the zemindar rajah, who soon came, escorted by about fifty men on ponies and a large number on foot, all armed, and some carrying flags. Instead of entering the ground from the road, the horsemen galloped along the top of the terrace and down a steep, rough sloping passage ending in two steps, which most of the ponies took at a rush. Miss Christie and I did not go into the grand stand, as we wished to be where we could use our cameras to advantage, and when the last pony had passed, we followed to the end of the course where the rajah and all the riders had dismounted. The crowd closed round us, for we were looked upon as a part of the show by the many of those present who had never seen a European woman before. They quickly formed a lane, and we found that the rajah was being posed for a picture, looking majestic in a long crimson robe trimmed with gold embroidery, a voluminous white pagri with a bunch of flowers tucked in its folds, a handsome Indian shield on his arm, and a drawn sword over his shoulder; his prime minister or general, robed like him, stood on his left hand, and the band was drawn up at the side with the long brass trumpets raised on high, the chowkidar fussing about to get everybody in the best position. When the photograph was taken the rajah was conducted to a carpet spread just below the grand stand, and here he sat cross-legged, gravely watching the proceedings, the prime minister beside him, the yak-horn hookah being brought at intervals. The first dance was the dedication of swords, which I had seen the day before; the next was a solo, called a natti, by an Astor

THE ZEMINDAR RAJAH, AT THE BIG TAMASHA, KHAPALLU.

Photographed by Miss Christie.

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man, very quick and unlike the slow Balti and Ladakhi performances; then came two or three more sword dances by six or eight men, like those I have already described, and after them scarf dances, and two of the usual Balti dances. The comic element was supplied by a man with his arms coloured black to the elbow and red to the shoulder, and wearing a large white goatskin wig, who skipped about and caused great laughter by stopping in front of us, pulling a note-book and pencil out of his wallet, and pretending to draw our portraits, afterwards doing the same to the zemindar rajah on his carpet. The leader of the claque was very busy, using his horse-whip as a hint to any who were not attending to their work. All the principal dancers were wazirs or lumbardars from this and other villages, tall strong men (most of whom had been in India), utterly unlike the short, ugly Ladakhis, though also of Tibetan origin, but intermarriages with their neighbours the Dards, who are often of great height and Jewish in feature, have changed and improved their looks and physique. The number of beautiful girl-faces amongst the crowd was very striking.

After these dances what looked like a table with five veiled figures on it, one in the middle and one at each corner, representing Gilgit ladies, came into the circle and waltzed round; the figure in the middle was a man who did the waltzing, but a handsome red Kashmir shawl, which served as a table-cover, hid his feet, and without being told one could not distinguish him from the dummies; a clown representing a hobby-horse and the man in the goatskin wig capered about near it. It was very curious, but no one could explain it.

After this the ground was cleared, the fifty horsemen arrived with swords, guns, bows and arrows, mounted,

and galloped backwards and forwards in a body, then played a game of polo, which was more a mêlée than anything else, owing to the immense number. Now and then they drew their ponies up close to the band, raised their sticks in the air, and danced up and down in their saddles, cheering the while. When this was over sixteen players, the Rajah Nasir Ali Khan among them, played a game of polo in a manner which greatly surprised Miss Christie, as it had done me when I first saw it. The game went on for an hour; then there was a pause for a quarter of an hour, during which the Rajah, sitting on his carpet, drank some water and smoked his hookah, and at the end of that time the game was resumed and lasted for another hour with the same ponies, which had been worked all that day and for days before, and though they looked tired when standing, yet when they started again they tore along, as eager as their riders.

Early in the afternoon a huge cake, 5 feet long and 2 feet broad, made of barley flour with a layer of butter in an ornamental pattern on the top, was carried in on a board supported on poles, and laid on the ground near the zemindar rajah; some time afterwards it was taken away, cut in pieces, and divided amongst the givers of gifts to the real Rajah.

The Astor man who danced the solo spread a cotton pocket-handkerchief (with a reminiscence of Manchester about it) on the ground before the zemindar rajah, skipped away, then returned and spread one in front of us. What did it mean? Backshish, of course. We put in a rupee between us, wondering if we were very shabby, and watched what the rajah gave—two annas, which the poor dancer dropped amid the jeers of the multitude, and could not find again.

The Rajah Spindia remembered the tamasha 36 years before, and said that this was exactly the same, except that masks of animals were worn at it, which seems to indicate that it had a common origin with the Lama dances, and that it probably dates from the time when Buddhism was the religion of Baltistan. The man who made the masks for the last tamasha here (in 1868) is since dead, and the art is lost so far as Khapallu is concerned.

I have described this festival in full detail because we are the only Europeans who have seen it, and it will not be held again till 1940.

The day after the tamasha Miss Christie left Khapallu for Skardo, and I followed next day, true to our principle of travelling alone.

There is nothing so queer as folk. The afternoon before I started the Rajah Nasir Ali Khan came to say good-bye, accompanied by the little schoolmaster, who is an Indian, be it noted. After a short conversation the Rajah asked me for—a chit! Not so very long ago I imagined a rajah to be a gorgeous and quite unapproachable individual in a gold coat wreathed with pearls, with a diamond aigrette a foot high in his cap, and to think that I should live to be asked by one for a chit! I was requested to say that the bandobast was good and the polo was good, which I did, adding that I had spent a very happy month in Khapallu. The next demand was for a sheet of paper and an envelope to write to some official; I gave him them, he looked them over, and—handed them back; they were not good enough. After this he had a long conversation with Aziz Khan about the Miss Sahib, which seemed as if it was not going to be explained to me, so I asked what

By the Author.

Polo Players at Khapallu.

By Miss Christie.

The Claque at the Big Tamasha, Khapallu.

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it was about. The importunate Rani had sent another message through him that she wanted my patience cards! As she had cards of her own I had no compunction in declining to give them, though if she had had none I might have taken pity on her and given her one pack, contenting myself with playing that tiresome little "Demon" which I cannot endure, but which is the only single game I know. The Rajah had hardly gone when Sultan Bi appeared and asked, for the fifth time, for the cards. I was intensely amused, but Aziz Khan was most indignant, and said these jungly Rajahs and Ranis did not know anything, and the little schoolmaster giggled, with the end of his pagri in his mouth as usual. I inquired if the Rajahs of Skardo and Shigar would ask for things like that. "Oh, no, certainly not; they are big Rajahs." The little schoolmaster had never even hinted at a backshish, and after the Rajah had gone I gave him a copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a mark of my appreciation. He reads English quite well, and the story of the pilgrim may interest him, and is suitable for people of any religion. We all have to resist Apollyon, and try to avoid falling into the Slough of Despond.

About a month afterwards a letter came to me addressed:

"To Sir
Miss E. Dumcan esquire
P.O. Skardo."

It was from the little schoolmaster.

"Sir,

"I most humbly and respectfully beg to state that you write a letter how are you and how is Aziz Khan—and where are you, I will be much obliged to

you. And I beg kindly you send me a picture of my school.

Your's servant.

SAYED MOHAMAD MOBARIK ALI
Headmaster Khaplu."

What a grand name for such a wee man! So I did write a letter and sent him a picture of the school, and there have been more requests for correspondence. The last I heard was that he was going to India.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FROM KHAPALLU TO SKARDO.

I LEFT Khapallu at eight o'clock on the morning of the 6th of September.

> "Joy have I had, and going hence
> I take with me my recompense.
> In scenes like these it is we prize
> Our memory, feel that she hath eyes."

The lumbardar and chowkidar walked down to the river with me to see me off on the zak or goatskin raft, for as the road on this side was reported to be very bad I decided, notwithstanding the terrifying accounts I had heard of this kind of ferry, to venture across on it. I had gone down one day to see a zak start, and found that it was not so bad as it was painted. The river was low, the current only about six miles an hour, and I was assured that there are never any accidents; but this is not quite correct, for in the early summer when the snows are melting and the swollen river rushes furiously along, zaks are sometimes upset, cargoes lost, and men drowned. Even since my arrival here in the beginning of August there had been such a heavy fall of snow and rain in the mountains that the Shayok rose to a height which made the use of zaks unsafe; but it had fallen again, and by the end of October it would have shrunk

ZAK FERRY ON THE SHAYOK.

By the Author

THE ZAK AFLOAT.

By the Author

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so much that a temporary bridge would be thrown across it at Khapallu to be used till the spring. It is always necessary when travelling off the beaten track to be particular to ask what time of year any information given applies to, for through want of consideration of this point endless mistakes are made and totally wrong impressions formed, resulting sometimes in much hardship and suffering to the traveller.

At the edge of the river two rafts were being prepared, each barely nine feet square and made of poplar poles, few of them so much as two inches in diameter. Twenty inflated skins of goats and small zhos are fastened to each raft, not very carefully, some of them being merely pushed under a cord that happens to be stretched across; all the openings in them are tied up firmly, except one leg through which the men blow with their mouths, then put a bit of feeble-looking woollen string round it once and tie it once, so that it may be easily undone when the thing collapses, which it does every few minutes; the dry skins were well splashed and then the raft was turned with them downwards in the water. The ends of the two rafts were tied together, and on this frail structure, eighteen feet by nine, ten men embarked, five of them being coolies, whose united loads amounted to 300 lbs. Batta went with them to separate him from another dog, as there was hardly room for a fight on board. The coolies landed on an island of sand half a mile down, put their loads on their heads and walked through the other arm of the river with the water breast-high, the current being so strong that Subhana had to be helped by two men to keep his feet. All went through with their clothes on, trusting to the sun to dry them afterwards. The rafts were

untied and carried through the shallows on the far side to a spot a little above where I was waiting, then launched and were swept by the current 200 yards lower down the bank, and carried back along the road by three men to the starting-point. The rafts were tied together again, and this time the cargo was seven coolies and their loads of over 400 lbs., three zakmen, two ponymen, Ramzana, and a dog; in addition to all this two ponies were towed behind. Oh! I did not know whether to laugh or to shudder. Four more ponies were pushed into the water to find their own way across, their owners on the banks shouting and throwing stones at them if they showed any disposition to shirk; but as soon as they got into the current they could not help themselves, and before long they found the bottom and walked to land. My turn came next; a single raft was brought, seven or eight skins that had gone flat were blown up again and a few added, and a bundle of grass with a piece of sacking over it for a seat was put in the middle. Aziz Khan had proposed taking a chair for me, but that would never have done, for the legs would have gone through the skins, and then—as someone said, if you have an accident on land there you are, but if you have one in the water, where are you? Well, I sat on the bundle quite comfortably, with Aziz Khan and four other men round me, and reflected that really it is surprising that after hundreds, indeed probably thousands, of years of navigating this river the methods should still be so primitive. On getting into the current where the water was deep the men rowed with their poles which have not the faintest semblance of a blade; on the contrary they held the thick ends in their hands and rowed with the thin ends. We soon got into a backwater which became very

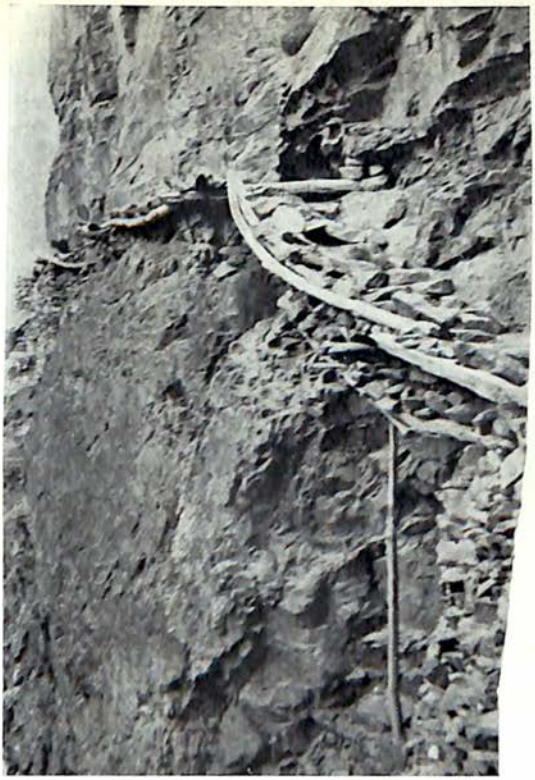
shallow, and we grounded at some distance from the island; one of the coolies took Aziz Khan, a fairly heavy man, on his back, but the load being rather too great for him he floundered about so much that two other coolies rushed and each seized one of Aziz Khan's ankles by way of helping, with the result that his bearer came plump down on hands and knees, and Aziz Khan would have shot over his head if the others had not been hanging on tightly. I laughed till the raft shook so that it was like to get afloat, which would have been highly inconvenient, for I was alone on it and without a pole. We had a long walk across sand and shingle to the other side of the island, where we again went on the raft, but by this time nearly all the skins had gone flat and had to be blown up again. While we were crossing, Aziz Khan remarked, "Not good bandobast, this," which, considering that the skins were collapsing under our very eyes, was a mild way of putting it.

When we first arrived at the river at nine o'clock there was a light puff of wind and a cloud of sand blowing far down on the opposite bank; but soon this stopped, the wind changed to the opposite quarter and the sun came out. Before I started, however, the wind had gone back to where it was, but was still very light, and I was a good deal surprised and rather disappointed to be then told that there was too much wind for it to be safe to sail all the way to Dowani, our next camping-place, twelve miles down, and that we must just cross over and ride the rest of the way. After this little experience of the raft, however, I was glad Aziz Khan had arranged to have ponies (the two that were towed over) waiting on the opposite bank in case of need. We had only ridden half a mile when a high wind arose,

and a dust-storm completely blotted out the opposite shore, some 200 yards off, so the zakmen had rightly judged the signs of the weather. It was eleven o'clock when we mounted the ponies, the ferrying having occupied two hours, but I would not have missed it on any account. The charge for it all was one rupee.

This kind of zak is luxury compared with that of sixty years ago, when the passenger sat on a zho skin with its legs in the air, and held on by one of them, putting an arm round the neck of the ferryman, who was in the water and held on by another of the legs as he half-swam, half-rowed with a paddle while he pushed the skin along. Things do progress on the Shayok after all, as they are doing in other parts of the "unchanging East," as witness the motor-cars in which the native shopkeepers of Delhi speed home at the end of their day's work.

The road to Dowani is capital, principally along the river shore, though there are some flights of steps here and there, but they were quite rideable on the two good polo ponies which we were taking home after the tamasha. They were tired, poor beasts, and no wonder, and we travelled very slowly. At Dowani there is a perfectly level plain (a most unusual thing in these parts), several miles in length and about half a mile in width, lying between the mountains and the Shayok, beautifully cultivated and wooded, some apricot trees being so large that they looked like gnarled old oaks. A shady, grassy lane wound along through borders of white flowering trambah surrounding fields of kangri with heads as large as bulrushes, corn-coloured and quite ripe here, though green at Khapallu only nine miles off; but this village faces the south, and is completely sheltered from the



By Miss Christie.

A Good Parao, or Platform Road, in the Shayok Valley.

By Miss Christie

The Bed of the Shayok River.

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north and east, and vines grow luxuriantly, twisting themselves up among the trees. A large basket of delicious grapes was brought to the camping-ground as soon as I arrived. They are grown only for eating, as no wine is made in this Mohammedan country.

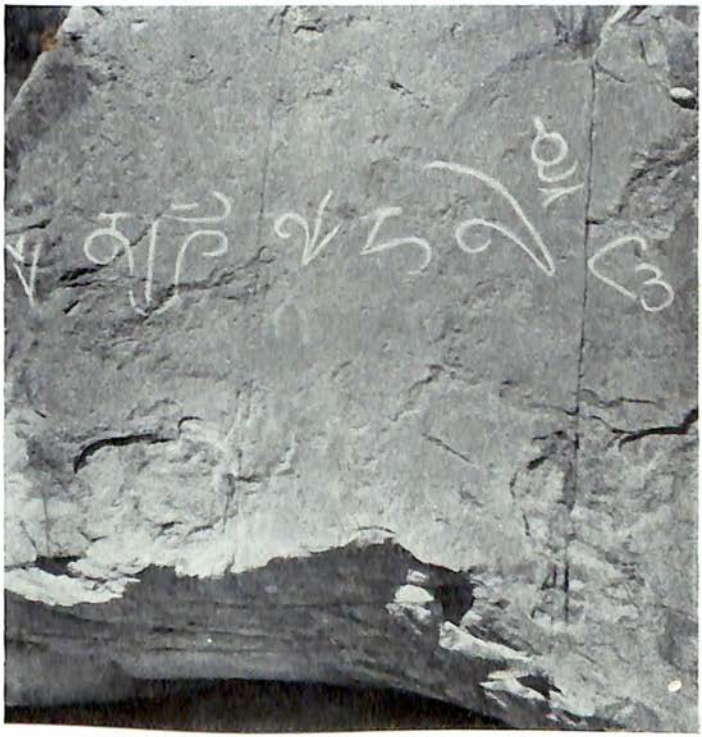
There is a fine nullah behind the village, up which a road leads to Shigar in three marches over the Thalle La, 16,000 feet, a pass rather easier than the Chorbat La, and from there it is only one march from Shigar to Skardo, while by the route I took, following the river, it is five to Skardo. I made a special journey from Skardo to Shigar and back, thus retracing my steps for some distance and making seven marches as against four by the other way; but as fresh snow falls in September on the Thalle La, and two of the marches are very long, nine, and ten and a half hours, with no villages, consequently no supplies, it seemed better not to risk it so late in the season. I was in no hurry, and wanted to see the country, and should have missed some pretty villages and a second and charming voyage on a zak had I taken the shorter road.

September 8th. Dowani is in its own way quite as beautiful as Khapallu, and the contrast of the bare mountains, with their rich changing colours showing through luxuriant foliage, is finer than if their sides were covered with a monotony of green. On leaving the village the path led through white trambah looking like fields of snow, and across a marsh, the first I had seen since leaving Kashmir. The ponies, very poor ones, which were hired here, floundered and boggled in it; but, fortunately, the two we had ridden from Khapallu were grazing in the marsh, and the owners were speedily found, saddles changed, and we proceeded comfortably.

Soon we reached the sandy river bed, which we left again to cross a rocky neck, and descended on the other side to the village of Kuness, where there was a scene of desolation, a great mass of water having rushed down the nullah behind, during the wet weather a few weeks before, swept away trees and fields, and destroyed many houses. The place belongs to the Rajah of Kiris, but the people said he would not do anything to help them in their trouble. From here to Kuru the road is very steep, winding up a high cliff with many flights of steps and a parao occasionally. There were great masses of blackened granite like the rocks in the Indus valley which have carvings on them, but I had never seen one carving since entering the Hanu nullah, though its inhabitants are Buddhists; but they are Dards, an illiterate race, never having been capable, apparently, of recording their hunting or fighting exploits in pictures as their Ladakhi neighbours do. It is against the Moslem religion to make an image or drawing of any creature, and when Baltistan adopted Mohammedanism no doubt all monuments and carvings connected with Buddhism were destroyed. I did not see a trace of a gompa, mani, or chorten in the country, though I made enquiries all along the route. On the road from Dowani to Kuru the ponymen were again asked if they had ever seen any rock carvings, and again said no. Five minutes afterwards I saw one, jumped off the pony, ran round the rock and found the other side covered with them. The sky had been thick with clouds, but at that moment the sun shone out most opportunely, and I took a photograph. A very little way further on there was another carved rock, with a picture of a chorten, a dog on a chain, several ibexes and an inscription in Arabic. This was also

By the Author

ROCK CARVINGS IN THE INDUS VALLEY.
"OM MANI PADMI HONG" REPEATED MANY TIMES.



By the Author.

ROCK CARVINGS IN THE SHAYOK VALLEY.
INSCRIPTION IN MODERN TIBETAN, SUBMERGED DURING THE SUMMER.

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photographed. The ponymen seemed amused by my eagerness, and said that these carvings were done by the little shepherd boys who spend the winter on the hills, which shows that there are memories and customs of the ancient religion of the country still lingering among the people. Near Kuru on this road, which was made about fifteen years ago, there were a few more carvings, almost entirely of hands, whole rocks being covered with them, but all here are very roughly done compared with those in Ladakh. From Kuru to Kiris the road lay a part of the time along the bed of the Shayok, which is dry from the end of August till the middle of May, and here there were two carved rocks, one with pictures of hands and two or three ibexes, the other having two pictures of chortens, badly done and a good deal worn, but unmistakable, and one inscription in modern Tibetan script. As these two rocks are covered with water when most travellers come this way, it is not likely they have been observed before. Cunningham[1] says: "In the middle of the fourteenth century appeared the great Lama Tsong Khapa" (who originated the sect of the yellow Lamas). "Pictures of him are hung up in all the temples, and the holy impressions of his hands and feet are said to be preserved in butter in the western chamber of the Potala Monastery. 'The prints of the Grand Lama's hands were eagerly sought for by the people' (Turner's *'Tibet,* p. 459)." It is doubtless these that are represented on the rocks. The outspread hands are a favourite emblem in the East. They are seen on the lintels of Jews' houses in Palestine and Syria, and also in Calcutta, and among the Mohammedans they mean the hands of Fatma, the daughter of the Prophet. Cunningham[2] adds: "I have a

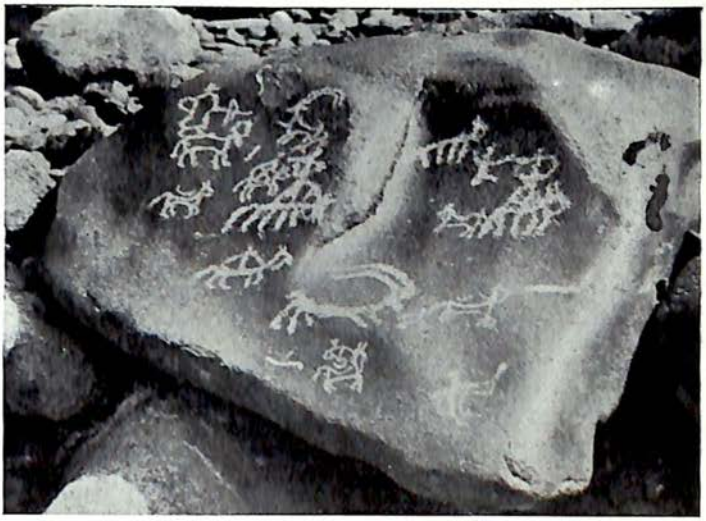
[1] *Ladak,* pp. 368-9.

[2] *Ladak,* p. 369.

sanad or grant by the Emperor Akbar, which bore on the back the print of his royal hand."

In the rock carvings here and in the Indus valley sportsmen are represented as armed with bows and arrows and guns. The bodies of the horses are sometimes formed of two triangles, the horns of the ibex are greatly exaggerated, while in the pictures of the snow leopard the artists always cleverly suggest the cat-like drawing out of its body when stalking its prey, and the immense length of its tail, which, reaches to the tip of its nose when turned over its back. This animal is shown just under the pot in the photograph facing this page.

The month spent at Khapallu was good bandobast, for in addition to the immense interest and enjoyment it afforded, the journey to Skardo was easier and pleasanter than it would have been at the beginning of August; the road was described to me as unbearably hot, but during this month, except in the middle of the day, it was quite cool, and there was a gentle, refreshing breeze from the north. The river had shrunk so much that for many miles one could travel along its bed instead of having to climb up and along the face of the cliff by a very rough path, over several paraos and across beds of shale. For some distance, however, where we had to leave the river bed the road was very bad, and in one place had been broken away by a landslip; a parao here was much the worst I have seen, only two feet wide, and on the poles thin flat stones were laid which tilted when stepped on, giving glimpses of the river hundreds of feet below at the foot of the precipice. Any of the poles may have been rotten, as they are never renewed till they break, and it is only a Tibetan who could manage to skip out of danger when his footing gives way under him in a place like this. Of course I walked, and equally, of course,



ROCK CARVINGS IN THE SHAYOK VALLEY. By the Author

ROCK CARVINGS IN THE SHAYOK VALLEY. By the Author

To face page 274

in the place of honour, first in the row, with the first chance of popping down through a broken pole, Aziz Khan behind grasping my arm, for there was no room for him beside me. The ponies must have been on the extreme edge with their bodies rubbing against the cliffs; as for the coolies, with loads projecting beyond their shoulders, they would have to go sideways. When we descended again the road was very easy, and entered Kiris through a poplar avenue nearly a mile long. The following month the river would be so low that zaks would no longer be used for crossing, as it could be waded; it would only occupy a few yards of its channel, which is a mile wide in places and covered with water in the summer, and people would sail down by zak all the way from Kiris to Skardo, 30 miles in six hours.

I had hoped to arrive at Kiris on the 7th by doing a double march from Dowani of 25 miles, but the march to Kuru from Dowani turned out to be 19 miles instead of 16 according to the guide-books, and the going was so slow that though a start was made at 7.30 a.m. we did not get to the camping-ground till 3.30 p.m.; Kiris is described as being nine miles further, but is really twelve. Double marches which lengthen out in that way are not to be attempted. I intended to keep on the right bank of the river and camp at Narh, but the news at Kiris was that the direct road to Shigar was very bad and partly under water owing to a flood in a side nullah, so we had to go to Skardo first with another experience of a zak, but a much larger and better one than that at Khapallu, as I was assured beforehand.

Kiris is another lovely village where a month could be spent most agreeably, there being even a small rajah to entertain one with his jungly ways. Fruit is plentiful, and

two large bunches of grapes and some apples were given to me by the chowkidar. The air is full of the chattering of sparrows, and there are many magpies and rooks; there is evidence of abundance of bird-life in the scarecrows fluttering in the fields. It is curious how many birds there are in one village and how few in another only a few miles off, and with seemingly the same food in both. I did not notice a single sparrow in Khapallu; two or three magpies, and a pair of hoopoes with two young ones were the only birds that came to the bagh. The soft call of the hoopoe, "hoopoe-poe-poe," is only heard in the late spring in this country, to which it is a summer visitor.

Round the Rajah's house there are many acres of golden kangri, with patches of white trambah, unfenced and unterraced, and the broad expanse of waving grain is a pleasant variety from the tiny fields common to the country. Some of the houses have an upper story of basket-work for living in in warm weather; one house had it in yellow and brown exactly like the fancy baskets at home. In the middle of the village there is a curious erection of stone, plastered or cemented over, 9 feet long, 8 feet high, and 15 inches thick, flat on both sides and rounded at the top; it is a target which the Rajah, Wazir and other principal men of Kiris use for archery practice.

When I came out of my tent for breakfast at seven o'clock on the 9th, the air was crisp and almost startlingly clear; every rock, every pebble stood out sharply in the sunshine on the mountain side. The road to the landing-place for the zak led for three miles through the village and along the side of a cliff, high above the river, which divides into two where the mountains recede, and encircles a large island of sand which for three months in the summer is covered with water. It must then look very like one of

our smaller Scottish lakes, being nearly a mile wide and surrounded by lofty hills. We got down to the river bank by a good winding path made about a year before, and waited for the zak just opposite to where the Indus comes down a gloomy gorge to join the Shayok, the rivers being about the same in volume here. The telegraph wires connecting Srinagar and Kargil with Skardo accompany the Indus on part of its course, and their appearance here gave a commonplace air to the rest of the journey till they were left behind again at Skardo. The last time I had seen them was at Khalatse on their way from Srinagar to Leh, and they were met with again at Burzil Chowki on the Gilgit road on their way from Gilgit and Astor to Srinagar.

The zak which was described as being so large and good, measured 12 feet by 9, and the skins certainly looked better than those on the Khapallu one, but in every other respect it was exactly the same. The servants and coolies with their loads crossed first; and then I went with Aziz Khan and four men, who all rowed with oars that would have made quite decent window-poles and had as much blade. One or two of the skins had to be blown up as we sailed. When we got into the current we glided smoothly along at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour for four miles, to near Gol on the opposite bank, and it was delicious in the midst of that grand scenery, the brilliant sunshine being tempered by a light northerly breeze which met us, and having the low thunder of the rapids in our ears. At that season these rapids prevented our sailing all the way to Skardo. Our good polo ponies, which we had brought from Khapallu, were sent back from the river-side when we went on board the raft, and we had a walk of three miles, at first through avenues of

willows and then along shady field paths, from the landing-place to the camping-ground at Gol, a beautiful bagh looking down on fields of grain, some of them in flower, with clumps of poplar standing tall and slim around them. The villages on the Shayok are nearly all charming, particularly now in the richness of approaching harvest, and each has its own peculiar feature, so that it is easy to keep them distinct in the memory. Those on the Indus are not nearly so pretty, and the scenery is more sombre, while this place, Gol, though rather attractive, has the disadvantage of being in a narrow part of the valley where it runs north and south, so that the sun comes late and leaves early.

I got to Gol at noon and might have gone on to Gomba Thurgon, four and a half hours further, but the lumbardar said all the ponies were out in the jungle and could not be brought in at once, and that if we would wait till next morning he would provide us with good ones. When next morning came he said there were none even in the jungle, to Aziz Khan's wrath, for this village is well supplied with them. Aziz Khan ferreted out a pony belonging to the moulvie, which he got for me, and he walked himself, and as it was an eight hours' march to Skardo, a good deal of it over burning sand, he was very tired, though he would not acknowledge it.

From Gol the road lay all the way along a flat, sandy space between the mountains and the river, the prevailing brownness of the scenery, unrelieved by variety of colour in the rocks, giving an impression of gloom even under a fierce sun. On the opposite bank lay the village of Narh, a long narrow belt of greenery on the hillside, most refreshing to the eye. Some men had crossed from there and brought a basket of grapes to me. Aziz Khan

bought several pounds for one anna, and he and the other servants made a meal of them. From Khalatse onwards a great deal of their food had consisted of fruit, which is very cheap in the villages, so that they could easily live on their rassad of two rupees a month.

We next passed some coolies carrying four very good ibex heads, followed by the sportsman, a young Englishman, who had been shooting in a nullah high above Narh. According to the etiquette of the country I stopped to ask for news, and congratulated him on his good sport. It had been bitterly cold at 15,000 feet where he camped, and there was a good deal of fresh snow, and yet here in the valley at 7000 feet it felt as hot in the middle of the day as it did at Leh when the thermometer was at 150°. Poor Batta felt it very much, being so close to the burning sand, and trotted on ahead till he found a rock to shelter under till we came up; when there was no rock large enough he scraped a hole beside the biggest stone he could see, and lay down in it to get as much shade as possible. Just at noon we got to Gomba Thurgon, prettily situated in the midst of fields in a wide part of the valley, 14 miles from Gol; and rested for two hours under some willows. There are miles of avenues of these trees near this village, and it is wonderful what good shade they give. Walnut trees are very poor in this respect, and one with a trunk fifteen feet in circumference throws no more shadow than a willow or even a poplar of three feet. Many of the large old walnuts here are pollarded, and the young branches look very flourishing on trunks which are quite hollow and decayed.

On the road we overtook three men carrying loads of pottery on their backs in netted string bags. The

pottery, which was to be sold in Skardo bazaar, consisted of jars and bowls, large and small, and was made at Parkuta, a village on the Indus above its junction with the Shayok. Four of the pieces had patterns of this description rudely inscribed on them— , all the rest of the three dozen being plain.

A few miles above Skardo there is an old fort which the road passes through; ten years ago three or four of the Maharajah's soldiers were posted in it as a guard, where formerly there was a much larger force, but the country is so secure now under British protection that they are not required.

Near this place we passed a young English couple on horse-back, apparently man and wife, the lady astride in riding breeches, looking very comfortably and suitably attired. Aziz Khan remarked that he had been eight times in Baltistan without seeing a single mem sahib, and this was the sixth this summer. The country is overrun with us!

Up to this point in the Indus valley, as far as I have seen it, the scenery is much less pleasing than on the Shayok; the forms of the mountains are not so grand, and the arid barrenness impresses itself more deeply on the mind, even the patches of cultivation on the narrow shelves of rock near the villages emphasising the extreme effort required to make anything grow. Just above Skardo however, the scenery becomes finer, the valley widens out into a level plain, with the river winding through it, and with what looks like an exaggerated Bass Rock in a sea of sand standing up boldly 1000 feet in the middle, the mountains, some of them snow-streaked, forming a guard all round it. The well-irrigated and grassy plain, twenty

miles long and five or six broad, was once a lake, and near the upper end of it is the great rock before mentioned, with an ancient killa part of the way up, and another on its very topmost pinnacle, standing guard over the villages of Skardo, which are scattered over the old shore of the lake, a plateau 150 feet above the Indus, and 7500 above the sea. The foot of the plateau is approached across the plain by a poplar avenue a mile or more in length, ending in a steep path which winds up and enters another avenue on the top as long as the first, passing the camping-ground to the post and telegraph office, hospital, and bazaar. The Rajah's house, the polo ground, and a Dogra fort are close by.

It is hot at Skardo in the summer, and in the end of August the shade temperature still rises to 80°, but it is cool at night. In the middle of September it was pleasantly warm. The fruit here is particularly good, but now the melons, peaches, and apricots were over, and there were only grapes left, which were delicious. In winter, though it is cold, there is less snow than in Kashmir, and the Indus seldom freezes. Dr. Thomson, who spent the winter of 1847-8 here, says in his *Travels in the Western Himalayas and Tibet*, that the first snow fell November 28th; the depth in February was 15 to 18 inches; the greatest cold was half a degree above zero on the 8th of February; and that during the whole winter the mean temperature at 2 p.m. was 33¾°.

Near Skardo there were large clumps of trees high up on the mountain sides, though lower down there was not a particle of verdure on them. The trees were so high up that their autumn foliage made them look like patches of lichen on the rocks at first sight, and it was only on looking at them through a field-glass that I discovered what they

were. It seems necessary as a rule to get to a height of 15,000 or 16,000 feet in this country before natural vegetation is met with.

Miss Christie arrived at Skardo a few hours after me, though she left Khapallu the day before I did, but her journey had been a most adventurous one. She had gone down to the river intending to cross on the zak, but there were great numbers of people from the tamasha going home by it, who crowded on it till they had to be driven back by main force. After sitting watching it for two hours and seeing it sink twice, Miss Christie preferred to do the next stage by the route described as *via* Kurphak in the latest guide-book (Duke's). I had intended to go this way too, but the Khapallu people had never heard of a place called Kurphak, and it and the road to it marked on the map seem to be equally non-existent. The people said so much about the badness of the track on their side of the river that I decided not to attempt it, and very much obliged I am to them for dissuading me; for Miss Christie found it difficult and dangerous, a mere goat-track three or four inches wide in places, across steep banks of soft, shifting sand, sloping to the river far below, alternating with bands of clay in which notches had to be cut to give foothold. The coolies were extremely unwilling to go on after reaching the first village, as the rest of the track was no better, and wished to return to Khapallu, but that would not have improved matters, for it was equally dangerous to go back. She therefore pushed on, and arrived at a miserable camping-ground beside a miserable village nearly opposite Kiris, so worn out that she had to rest there a day before proceeding further. No European woman, and very few sahibs had ever used this route, and the villagers came in crowds to look at her. She despatched a note by coolie

to Kiris asking for the raft to be sent to take her to Gol, and this most fortunately came when I was there, for otherwise her message might not have been understood, not a creature in the place knowing English. After my voyage was over the zak went for her, and notwithstanding all her previous tremors she thoroughly enjoyed the seven or eight miles' voyage on it, and was only sorry she had not taken to it at first, and so avoided that frightful piece of road. The Rajah of Kiris wanted to see her as she passed his house, which overhangs the river, and the raft was steered close under his balcony, where he stood salaaming profusely. The Gol lumbardar had been as rude to her as to me, refusing to give her ponies also, and she had to walk almost all the way to Skardo. At Aziz Khan's suggestion I sent a note to the Tehsildar here, reporting this misconduct.

There was neither lumbardar nor chowkidar at the camping-ground at Skardo on my arrival soon after five o'clock, and it was not till nine that one of them was found. This was strange in an important place like the capital of Baltistan. It is a point that many sportsmen make for, but it was getting late in the year for them, and we two mem sahibs were the only Europeans here. Our tents were pitched near each other, but beyond range for talking, so we enjoyed our beloved silence while contriving to have an air of sociability.

CHAPTER XXV.

SKARDO AND SHIGAR.

On my arrival at Skardo the postmaster soon came to see me to explain why he had not sent a registered letter to Khapallu which was lying in the post-office when my coolie messenger called, and why he had not sent me any stamps by Ramzana. He was an old man and looked quite imposing, dressed in his best, coat, pyjamas, shoes and voluminous pagri, though he did official business in the post-office in his night-garb. He begged me not to report him for overlooking the registered letter, as it would cause him to lose his pension after thirteen years' service. In gratitude to me for letting him off, he arranged with a dealer in the bazaar to cash a cheque of mine on the Srinagar Bank at two per cent. instead of five, which was the rate demanded at first. An Indian shopkeeper who happened to pass through Khapallu when I was there offered to cash one for one per cent. Great is the confidence in sahibs!

One afternoon I was sitting writing when I heard a peculiar little cry, and on looking up saw three falconers winding through the trees and along the path which passed close to my tent, each with a hawk on his wrist; the Rajah, all in white and surrounded by several attendants, rode behind. I wanted to run after them to see the hawk-

ing, but they were going a long way up a nullah after chikor—too far for me to follow them. I had not even time to photograph the picturesque group with its background of cultivated valley bounded by the lofty Mustagh mountains, which melted out of sight in the golden distance.

It is the proper thing for sahibs to call on the Rajah; this was quite inadmissible for us two women, so we sent to ask if we might call on the Rani; but owing to the recent death of her sister she did not receive visitors, and was living in a strict seclusion which would last for a year. The Rajah sent his "biggest salaams" to the Miss Sahibs, and said he would have polo for them next day, requesting that I would not go to Sadpor then, as Aziz Khan told him I had arranged to do, to see the Buddha rock which I had been told about at Khapallu. As it happened, the morning was quite unsuitable for the intended trip, the air being full of mist and dust after a windy night, making photography impossible, so I put off going till we returned from a visit to Shigar which Miss Christie and I had actually planned to take together.

We paid a visit to the lower of the two old killas, which was partly destroyed by the Dogras when they conquered the country in 1840, but which has been restored; it is built on two shelves of a projecting spur of the great rock in the middle of the valley, and is approached by a wonderfully easy modern road, very unlike the paths up to any other such places I have seen. At the foot of the rock there are a few ruins which Dr. Thomson describes as exhibiting in 1847 the remains of former magnificence, including a part of a marble fountain, but of this we saw nothing; they are probably the ruins of the palace of Ahmed Shah, the last independent Rajah of Skardo, who

set fire to it on the approach of the Dogra army before retreating into the stronghold which towered above it. In the courtyard of the killa there is a dilapidated mosque, the ziarat or shrine of this Rajah, and on a terrace above it stands the lower killa itself, which is entered through a large guard-house containing a dozen little old cannon of Kashmir manufacture; one had a wooden butt like a rifle, and all the others were simply tubes thicker at one end than the other, with a pentagonal or hexagonal bore, and were fixed on rests with screws for raising and lowering them. Guns of the latter pattern were used on boats in Kashmir formerly for duck-shooting. The sentry was armed with a silver-handled scimitar. The walls are very thick, and there are piles of stones laid on the parapets, but the place does not look strong. The highest peak of the rock, about 1200 or 1400 feet above the valley, is precipitous on all sides; in the small upper killa perched on the top of it the Rajah Ahmed Shah took refuge during the Dogra siege, having laid in a stock of provisions to last for three years. For some time he defied his enemies, who could not find any way of getting at him till, according to local tradition, a faithless subject betrayed him for a bribe and showed the pathway. There is a picturesque modern Dogra fort below the killa, and on the way to it we were shown a low-roofed cell in a wall on the roadside in which prisoners used to be shut up and starved to death. Near the fort are barracks, where a part of a regiment of the Maharajah's soldiers is stationed.

That afternoon we went to the polo match, in which the Rajah of Skardo and the Rajah of Shigar (who was visiting him) both joined; but the play was not good, the ball being often missed, and the players, eight on a side, getting into knots. A dust-storm was going on

By the Author.

FERRY BOAT ON THE INDUS.

By Miss Christie.

AHMAD SHAH'S RUINED ZIARAT AT THE FORT, SKARDO.

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at the time, blotting out the scenery like a November fog.

The next day we marched to Shigar, a collection of villages eleven miles off on the Shigar river, and had to cross the Indus just above Skardo, where there was a ferry boat, flat-bottomed and square-ended like a Thames punt, which held twenty coolies and two ponies and myself and servant quite comfortably. This is a very ancient type of boat; it is built like the Kashmir cargo-boats with the planks fastened together with strong clamps on the outside, exactly the same as one which figures in a carving on a pillar at the Great Tope at Sanchi in India, which dates from 200 B.C. Every time it crossed it was carried down by the current past the best place for landing and had to be towed back in the slack water by a couple of men, who waded close under the bank, but we were all on the other side in less than half an hour.

The Indus here begins to be called the Attak (or Attock), the name by which it is known to the Indians; the ancient route to the plains of India followed its course, but was so frightfully bad that it has been abandoned in recent years in favour of that by Kargil and the Zoji La, or of the Deosai plains, since the good roads from Leh and Gilgit to the Vale of Kashmir, and thence by the Jhelum valley to Rawal Pindi have been made. Fâ-hian, the Chinese traveller who journeyed down the river in the beginning of the fifth century on his way to Afghanistan from K'uch-ch'a (probably Skardo), describes the route in much the same terms as those used by Dr. Thomson and other 19th century travellers. Fâ-hian says: "The way was difficult and rugged, running along a bank exceedingly precipitous which rose up there, a hill-like wall of rock, 10,000 cubits from the base. When one approached the edge of it his eyes

became unsteady, and if he wished to go forward in the same direction there was no place in which he could place his foot, and beneath were the waters of the Indus. In former times men had chiselled paths along the rocks and distributed ladders on the face of them, to the number altogether of 700, at the bottom of which there was a suspension bridge of ropes by which the river was crossed, its banks being there 80 paces apart." Dr. Thomson relates in his *Travels* that, in 1840, he went for some distance down the river from Skardo, and had encountered forty of these ladders when he was obliged to turn back on account of the badness of the way. In Colonel Waddell's *Among the Himalayas* there is a photograph of some ladders on the face of a precipice ending in a bridge which gives a vivid idea of these nightmare-like structures. A rope-bridge is bad enough in itself, but when it has to be approached by such ladders it is not surprising that even coolies have sometimes to be blindfolded and carried across. A sportsman told me that he had crossed one, and the thought of having to re-cross it had kept him awake the whole night long. I carefully avoided all willow bridges.

Poor Fâ-hian had a bad time altogether, for his terrors were added to by the dragons which he believed inhabited the mountains, and "which when provoked spit forth poisonous winds and cause showers of snow and storms of sand and gravel. Not one in ten thousand of those who encounter these dangers escapes with his life." These storms of gravel are the avalanches of stones and rocks which occur after a high wind, and the roar of whose fall is a familiar sound in the Himalayas.

After crossing the ferry we rode along the river sands to where a little stream came down among the rocks, nourishing a grass plot and a few trees, and here we halted for an hour.

A flock of sheep and goats came to drink, and Batta gratified his hereditary instincts by doing a little amateur shepherding, rounding in any of them he thought had gone too far, and having a stone sent after him sometimes for his pains. After passing through a rather steep and rough gorge we caught sight of Shigar nestling among its orchards, and we soon entered one of the long avenues of willows and poplars which usually form the approach to villages in this part of Baltistan. In the avenue there were some apricot trees with enormous vines twisting themselves in great loops as they climbed to their tops. In a field a goat was feeding which had horns exactly the same as those of an ibex, a very unusual circumstance.

We camped on the polo ground (nice for the polo!) as there would be no play for several days owing to the Rajah's absence. The ground is the largest in Baltistan, 365 yards long by 50 in width, and is covered with good grass; the goals, which are 25 to 30 yards from the ends of the ground, are marked by a row of three or four white stones the size and shape of half a bowl for playing bowls. At one side there is an enormous walnut tree, which must be several centuries old, and at one end a white poplar over 100 feet high with a great hollow in the trunk. Near it there is a huge chenar or plane-tree like those which are the glory of Kashmir, where it is quite common to see them with trunks 15 to 20 feet in girth.

There is an old killa on a rock, which, of course, had to be visited. For a part of the way up the path was quite good, but it ended in a precipice up which I was dragged by the kotwal and another man, both barefooted, and the way they walked up a smooth, almost perpendicular cliff, at the same time pulling me along, was perfectly marvellous. I interested myself deeply in watching their feet and

looking out for crevices in which to put my toes, as looking at the view or thinking how I was to get down again did not tend to either equilibrium or equanimity. When we reached the last shelf but one, I was told that if I went to the very top it would be very bad coming down over a quantity of loose stones, and I therefore paused here to gaze at the magnificent scenery. Immediately below was the wide fertile valley of the Shigar which falls into the Indus opposite Skardo, and to the north and east were the snowy ranges of the far-reaching Karakorams, where those immense glaciers lie which have been explored and described by Sir Martin Conway and other distinguished travellers, among them Mrs. Bullock Workman, the only woman who has entered that great ice-world.

There was nothing to be seen in the ruinous killa, but in the rock close to the buildings there are two deep fissures each open towards the country, into which prisoners were lowered and left to starve, with fields and farms and orchards and the shining river and their fellowmen in full view far below them, while they sat watching them in helpless agony.

There are a great many bright green stones called zahar mohra, looking like a species of inferior jade, lying about on the ground at Shigar, which the inhabitants make into pipes, cups, dishes, knives, spoons, and cooking utensils, all articles of every-day use, for here the stone age is still in existence. I went to a cottage to see a man at work on these things; in the floor there was a small square opening, across which was a bar with a drill fixed on the end of it, and with it a cup was being scooped out. The bar was turned by means of a treadle worked by a woman who sat on the floor with her feet down in the hole in which it was placed, the man

pressing the cup against the drill. The stones are collected in the autumn, before the snow comes, and are manufactured for the most part in the winter, so this was not a good time to see specimens of the work, and the few shown me were rough and imperfect.

Near the polo ground there is a large and very handsome mosque in a walled enclosure, shaded by some fine old chenar trees; a broad flight of steps leads to a spacious veranda, in which I lingered long, gazing with delight at the rich carving on door-posts and window-frames, the designs in most cases being the same as those at Khapallu, but much more finely executed. The moulvie, a handsome, well-dressed man who was delighted to show off the beauties of his mosque, said that a round brass plate over the lintel of the door covers a document giving the age of the building, which he stated to be a thousand years! In the interior four tall walnut pillars, tapering towards the top in the natural lines of the tree-trunks from which they were made, support the cross beams of the roof; the bases and bracketed capitals are carved in bands of different patterns, the chevron being conspicuous among them. The woodwork of the ceiling is partly coloured. Near this mosque are two small ones also beautifully decorated, with horse-shoe shaped arches in the veranda of one of them, now disused and fallen into decay, from which we would fain have carried some pieces of exquisite carving lying scattered on the ground, but feared it might be looked upon as sacrilege or theft, or something equally scandalous that would bring discredit on the British name.

In the village there are three butts for archery, none so large as the one at Dowani, but all ornamented—one with a pattern scratched in the plaster, and the other

two with designs painted in colour, the fleur-de-lys, which is often seen in carved wood in Baltistan, having a prominent place. A hole in the middle of the butt represents the bull's-eye, and when shooting is going on a piece of paper is laid round it for the other marks, inners, etc. Here, too, the Rajah and leading men in the place practise archery as at Dowani.

At Shigar there are no midnight tamashas, and no flowers are worn in either men's or women's caps there or at Skardo. On a certain day in the spring the Shigar people light a fire in their fields and bake a cake on it of flour and oil, as an offering, that their crops may be good; the cake is then given to the poor. In the Punjaub, at the same season, the zemindars kill one or two sheep or a chicken, according to their means, cook them in the house, and take them out and eat them at midnight in the fields, where they sleep the rest of the night. This ceremony is not prescribed in the Koran. Fires are made on graves here, probably a survival of the Buddhist custom of burning the dead. Rosaries are used both by Buddhists and Mohammedans in Western Tibet, and so are amulets made of silver or cloth, containing prayers or texts from the Koran, which are worn on the cap, round the neck, and round the right arm, or sewn on the coat—a very ancient custom in the East which the Israelites were commanded to follow. Great faith is put in amulets. Aziz Khan told me that at Himis he did not feel well, and a Lama gave him a prayer written on paper which he fastened inside his coat, and he had been quite well ever since; at Skardo he showed me with great pride a prayer for his safety and welfare which a "very big moulvie" at his village had written, and his wife had just sent him; he had

ARCHERY BUTT AT SHIGAR. By the Author.

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BUTTER MAKING IN BALTISTAN. By theiAuthor.

tied it in the end of his pagri. Some people call wearing amulets of this kind idolatry, but it seems to me to be rather a reminder of divine protection which no one can be the worse for. In some cases they do take the form of witchcraft, however, as once when a sahib of Aziz Khan's, who was on a shooting expedition, was quite determined to go by a very bad road, Aziz Khan put a prayer charm under the covering at the foot of the sahib's bed, which had the desired effect of making him change his mind before morning and go by a safer way.

I was drawing a carving on the outside of the mosque door when it opened suddenly and a youth came out who was as much startled as I was at first, but stayed to see what I was doing and was quite interested, pointing out my place if I paused for a moment. He went away, but returned in a few minutes, and gave me to understand that I must stop, and as I then happened to be taking a rubbing (very unsuccessfully) with a spoon and a piece of paper, I thought he might be an official who objected to my touching the building, so the spoon was laid down and the pencil taken up; but he put his henna-stained fingers over the place I was looking at, and as that did not stop me he hung the end of his pagri against it. Some women sitting on the edge of the veranda seemed amused by the persistence shown on both sides, and laughed when I turned to look at them; as women are always the worst when there is a show of fanaticism. I was sure I was doing no harm, and looked upon the affair as a kind of joke; it ceased to be a joke, however, when the boy took hold of my pencil and paper, not roughly, but determinedly. So I said to him (in English), "How dare you do that?

I'll report you to the Maharajah, and the Rajah, and the Wazir Wazarat, and the Commissioner at Leh, and I'll go now and bring the chowkidar!" I was gathering up my things to go when one of the women said, "Mem sahib," and waved her hand towards the carving in sign that I was to go on. "Is this not a moulvie?" I asked. "No, he is not." "Soṅ" (go away) I said, standing two steps above him, flourishing my pencil in his face and enjoying turning the tables on him immensely. "Soṅ! I will report you to the Rajah." He was off like a shot and out of sight in a moment. Another woman joined the group, and there was an animated conversation in which the word "report" was repeated several times. It is a blessed word, "report," the open sesame of this part of the world. Aziz Khan complained of the rude boy to the moulvie, who came and sat on the steps himself to ensure that I was not disturbed.

The northern districts of Baltistan used to be much oppressed by the neighbouring Kanjutis, the men of Hunza and Nagar, who came down from their fastnesses robbing caravans and killing and harrying villagers. The Kashmir Government was helpless or indifferent during the fifty years that had elapsed since the conquest of the country by the Dogra Gulab Singh, the first Maharajah, but in 1903 our Government sent the expedition against Hunza and Nagar, under Colonel Durand, to put an end to an intolerable state of matters. The following passage from *Where Three Empires Meet* (p. 231) gives a graphic account of the troubles of the Baltis:

"These poor Baltis, robbed by the tax-farmers of their conquerors, hunted by Kanjuti robbers to be sold as slaves in Central Asia, dragged from their homes to do

forced labour on the Gilgit Road, and murdered by their Suni neighbours, have hitherto dragged on but an insecure and harassed existence among their wild hills and valleys.

"But in every respect a better time is now coming for the Baltis, as they are already beginning to realise; and for this they have to thank our interference in the affairs of the Kashmir State. The Kanjutis who sold them as slaves will do so no longer, since Colonel Durand's successful expedition; the position we have taken up at Gilgit has put a stop to the raids of the Indus Valley tribes; an organised transport corps will now do away with the evils of the Gilgit Road begar;[1] and when our Settlement Officer has extended his work to this portion of the Maharajah's dominions, it is to be hoped that the poor persecuted Baltis will become the happy and prosperous people they deserve to be. For this is a blameless and innocent race of men. Europeans who have travelled through their country always speak well of, and remember with kindly feelings, these honest, simple, cheerful, and good-natured creatures, in whose character there is much that is pathetically attractive."

The remarkable change for the better prophesied in these words has already come to pass in the ten years which have elapsed since they were written, and now, instead of meeting an official with lanterns in daylight to show him their misery distinctly, as it is recorded that the villagers did in one instance, they greet him with music and dances. The prosperity visible in the country compared with the picture given of its former state might be a lesson to those people at home who accept their own peace and security as a

[1] Forced labour.

mere matter of course, but utter cries of protest against a Government which proceeds to extend these benefits to others who are under its protection. Can there be a nobler mission for a great nation than to rescue the oppressed, to prevent slavery, and to give the peaceably disposed liberty to go about their daily work unmolested? Recent history records that tribes and states (Ladakh among others) have asked to be taken under British protection when they saw the benefits resulting from it, though some have been refused, and I myself, when I was in Syria a few years ago, heard the natives say how they wished their country could be as Egypt is. But nothing will convince some stay-at-home Britons, who always know so much better than those who go abroad and see things for themselves.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BUDDHA ROCK AND ANCIENT BARRAGE AT SADPOR.

We returned to Skardo on the 16th of September, and next morning I went to Sadpor in search of the carved rock which the Rajah Spindia at Khapallu had told me about, and also of the door with a border of figures of Buddha, which Aziz Khan had seen twelve years before and had frequently spoken of after he knew I was on the watch for Buddhist remains in Baltistan. The morning was fine and sunny, and as we rode along we passed two men sitting on a mat under the trees by the road-side, each rolling a goat-skin backwards and forwards; the skins were full of milk, and butter was being made of it in the Balti fashion.

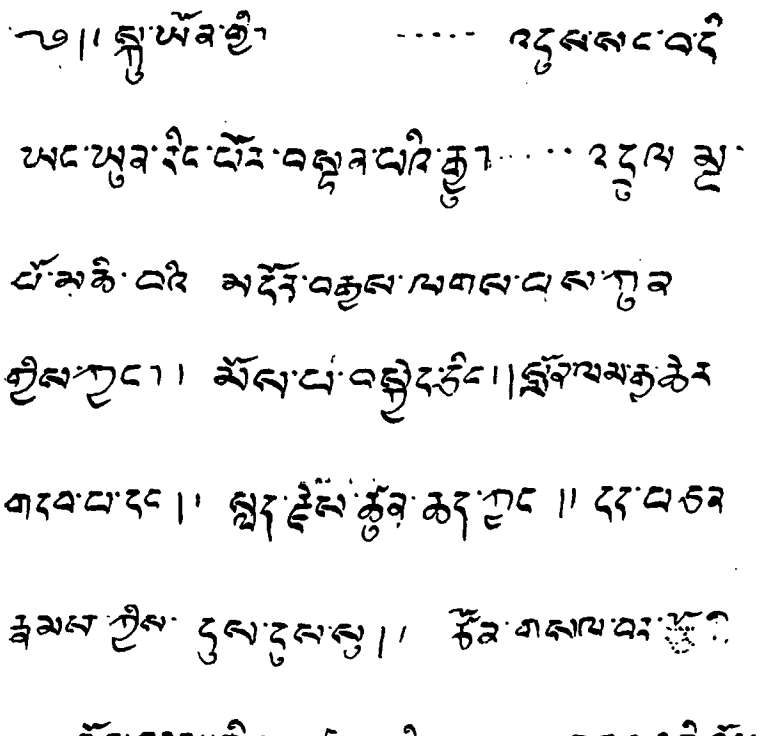
Three miles and a half from Skardo, and a few yards off the road to Sadpor, we came to the rock, which proved to be a large and important relic of antiquity. It is of granite, 18 or 20 feet high, and nearly as wide, and is covered with carvings in low relief; its face is slightly concave, has been carefully smoothed and is of a pale buff colour, in strong contrast with the dark boulders surrounding it. In the centre there is a large Buddha seated on a lotus in the attitude of renunciation; around him also seated on lotuses are twenty smaller Buddhas

each 21 inches high, forming a square, five on a side, and on each side of the square there is a colossal standing Buddha. The faces and figures of these two last are full front, but the feet are in profile, one behind the other (as in Egyptian sculpture), each foot being 21 inches long. Below the middle of the square there is carved a jar containing a lotus-flower and two leaves, with a long inscription on each side; the letters are about an inch long, deeply sunk, and coloured with a red pigment which makes them very distinct, except in places where they have been purposely chipped away. At the top of the rock above the Buddha's head there is a square hole, which the chowkidar, who acted as my guide, said was used for holding a light, and the stone round it looks smoke-blackened. At the right-hand end of the rock, slightly angled to the front, low down, and overshadowed by a projecting part, there is a third inscription equally long with the other two, which has also been partly defaced. At the left end of the rock, which is here about 12 feet high, at a right angle with the front, there is an incised carving of a seated Buddha with a standing Buddha on each side of him, but this part of the rock is so black in places and overgrown with lichen that they are not easily seen.

I made copies of the inscriptions, and on my return home the following year submitted them to several Buddhist scholars in London and Paris, none of whom however could give a rendering satisfactory to themselves on account of the many blanks left where the letters on the rock were entirely obliterated, and where others were so much defaced that I, ignorant of the Tibetan characters, did not attempt to take them down. I wrote to Mr.

Francke telling him of my difficulty in getting a good translation, and he immediately sent a competent Tibetan from Khalatse to Sadpor to make new copies (of which photographs are here given), and this man was able

No. I.



to fill up many of my blank spaces, as he recognized numerous letters which had been partly destroyed. He had a long and fatiguing journey to Sadpor and back, having to walk 320 miles over rough tracks, up and down the beds of streams and along paraos, and to cross and re-cross the Chorbat La, a pass nearly 17,000 feet high. His charge for travelling expenses for several

weeks and his trouble in making the copies amounted to the modest sum of 12 rupees (16s.).

The inscriptions, judging from the orthography employed, are, Mr. Francke says, "as old as those at Balu-mkhar, dating from not later than 1000 A.D., and, imperfect as they are, are of great philological and antiquarian interest; they all seem to refer to the sculptures on the rock." Line No. 8 in the third of them seems to indicate that the sculptures of Buddha are much older than the inscriptions themselves. Mr. Francke's readings of them and notes on them are as follows:

NUMBER I.

1. Of the offering . . . this secret collection (Buddha's religion)
2. as it will be taught for a long time . . . decaying; as
3. many are lost through death, all men should,
4. showing devotion, offer very many prayers;
5. henceforth for ever the faithful ones [should]
6. from time to time [make] the colours[1] [of the sculptures] bright,
7. and make a cleaning [or, and clean] the place of offering that it may not decay.

NUMBER II.

1. Preaching perfection with body, speech[2] and mind,
2. on this firm medallion[3] here . . .
3. the five [Buddhas] in the middle (surrounded by?) . . .
4. through mercy it originated from
5. me [called] Great-hand . . .
6. the very good Samantabhadra . . .
7. (row?)
8. (mother?) (earth?) to cut . . .

[1] These sculptures were all coloured, and the letters of the inscriptions are still red.

[2] *ysum* instead of *ysung* is a mistake.

[3] An arrangement of Buddha in the middle surrounded by other Buddhas is called a medallion.

No. II.

No. III.

NUMBER III.

1. Salutation to the three gods!
2. offering; children (or riches?) of men, and . . .
3. of the teaching which is firmer than anything . . .
4. body (or statue) . . .
5. of the magnified . . .
6. it was looked for by him with trouble
7. outsiders or insiders (Buddhists or Non-buddhists) . . .
8. from this medallion,[1] which has been shown since a long time, is . . .
9. very long (?) . . .

The evangelist of the Moravian mission at Khalatse, a native Christian who was formerly a Buddhist Lama at Tashi Lhunpo, the celebrated monastery at Shigatse in Great Tibet, gives the following explanation of the figures in the medallion: "The two standing are Maitreya (the future Buddha): the one seated in the centre is the historical (or present) Buddha, Sakya Muni;[2] all the small ones round him are the Buddhas of previous Kalpas,[3] and the one over the head of the central figure is the Buddha of the last Kalpa before the present one."[4]

The rock is on the top of the steep left bank of the Sadpor River (at this season an insignificant stream flowing through several channels), and so near the edge

[1] "This medallion" is the sculpture shown in the photograph.

[2] An Indian prince, born c. 600 B.C.

[3] A Kalpas is a vague era, popularly looked upon as 100,000 years.

[4] According to the belief of his followers the present Buddha, or "The Enlightened," is one of a long series of Buddhas. The Tibetans say that the next one, the Buddha Maitreya, or Buddha of Mercy, will be a white man; when he is represented seated it is in the European fashion, not cross-legged like an Oriental. This belief is very curious in the light of recent events in Lhasa. It should be borne in mind that Buddha is revered as the Great Teacher of his religion and not as a god, except by the very ignorant who worship his image amongst their other idols.

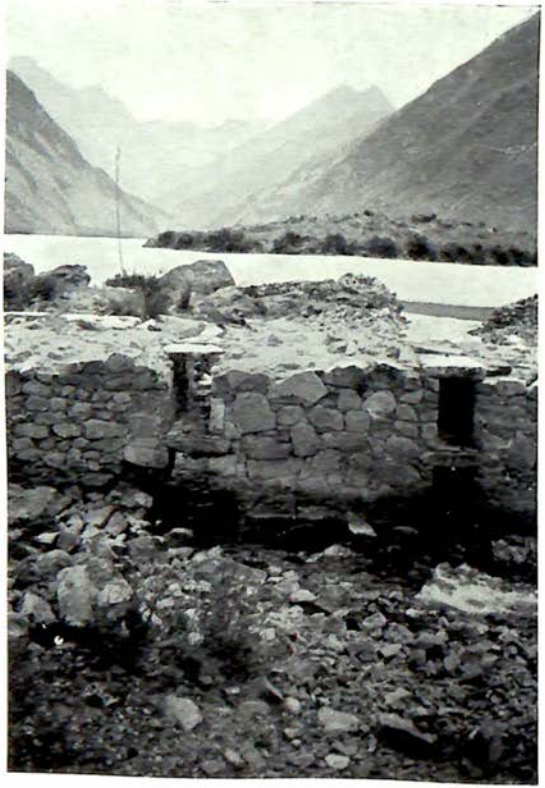
that it is impossible to take a complete view of it in a photograph. Although, on approaching it, it is quite conspicuous from the opposite bank when once the attention has been directed to it, yet it might be easily passed without notice by the two or three European sportsmen who may go up the Sadpor nullah in a season, as the path runs behind it, where it looks just like the rest of the boulders scattered round it except that it is larger. Aziz Khan, who has excellent sight and is very observant, had passed it eight times when he was up here with shooting sahibs without seeing it, and I did not meet anyone, not even Dr. Neve of Srinagar, the author of *The Tourists' Guide to Kashmir*, who had ever heard of it, till after my return to Srinagar in the following November, when a mining engineer who had been at Skardo on a prospecting tour a few weeks after I left told me he had been dragged most unwillingly to look at it, because "all the sahibs go to see it, and photograph it," a truly native way of exaggerating a thing that has been done once.

Behind the Buddha rock there is a smaller rock with a chorten three feet high incised on it, the only other carving I saw.

It is surprising that in the midst of a purely Mohammedan population these monuments have been allowed to remain intact except for the partial defacement of the inscriptions, while over the rest of the country every trace of its ancient religion appears to have been destroyed.

We next proceeded to Sadpor Tso to see the door with the Buddhas, and instead of following the Sadpor river, which issues from the lake, turned to the right and took a shorter route, crossed a low pass and reached the lake

in 4½ miles. From the top of the pass we had a view of its southern end, where there is a village, the only one on its banks, and from it a short but rough road leads to the Deosai plain, up the Sadpor nullah. The lake is a beautiful little sheet of deep blue water, a few miles long and about a mile wide, with a narrow strip of verdure all round, between it and the bare mountains which tower above it; there is an island in the middle on which some trees and shrubs grow, near the shore. On coming down to the river my surprise was great to see a miniature of the barrage at Assouan, which I visited the year before it was finished, and to realise that it had been anticipated centuries ago by Tibetan engineers. This barrage crosses the river just where it leaves the lake, is about 14 feet high and 6 feet thick, and has two tiers of doors, six in each tier, each door 5 feet by 2 feet 9 inches, with deep, smoothly cut, semicircular grooves to receive the rounded edges of the dressed granite slabs, now lying in the water below, which were used to close them. The lower tier of doors is blocked and half buried on the side next the lake by stones washed against it by the stream, which has made a new channel for itself round the end of the barrage. A few yards lower down a moraine, the ancient shore of the lake, stretches right across the valley, and the river has cut its way through it, leaving a cliff 30 feet high on its eastern bank. The moraine stands up like a knife and is perfectly level along the top; on the west side, which is much further from the mountains than the other, it is gradually lost in the rise of the ground, but on the east, at a distance of about 50 yards from the stream, there is another cleavage, 20 feet high, which may have been formed by a branch of the river.



By the Author.

BARRAGE AT SADPOR TSO.

LOOKING UP THE LAKE TO THE ISLAND AND NULLAH.

To face page 304.

By the Author.

BARRAGE AT SADPOR TSO.

LOOKING DOWN THE LAKE. THE END OF THE GLACIAL MORAINE IS SEEN ON THE RIGHT ABOVE THE BARRAGE.

At the end of the moraine, next the river, a buttress of masonry partly formed of square stones is built against it, and was the pier of a pair of sluice-gates to further regulate the flow of water. The corresponding masonry on the western bank has been used as a quarry by the Skardo people, and not a trace of it remains beyond a few boulders at that end of the moraine. The difficulty of getting to the eastern side across the stream has prevented entire destruction here. There are two doors in the pier of the sluice-gates the same size as those in the barrage, the lower one partly blocked, and it was round the upper one that there were small figures of Buddha when Aziz Khan was here twelve years ago; but these have disappeared, and he was as much disappointed as I was not to see them. At that time the Rajah, Shah Abbas of Skardo (who died in 1898), told him that a Gurkha regiment of the Maharajah's then stationed at Skardo had one day's leave in the week to go and do pujah (worship) at Sadpor to the figures on the rock and round the door, and the chowkidar now informed me that when the regiment left the district two years afterwards, the men took all these little images away with them to worship; he added that it was a good thing they could not carry away the Buddha rock, or it would have gone too. The opening at the other end of the passage through the buttress, to which this door gives access, is covered with a quantity of earth and stones fallen from above, and as it was in the same condition twelve years ago, before the Gurkhas committed their depredations, it is probable that if excavated it would be found with its border of figures complete. At a little distance there are two nearly perfect slabs of grey granite lying on the bank which would fit these two openings,

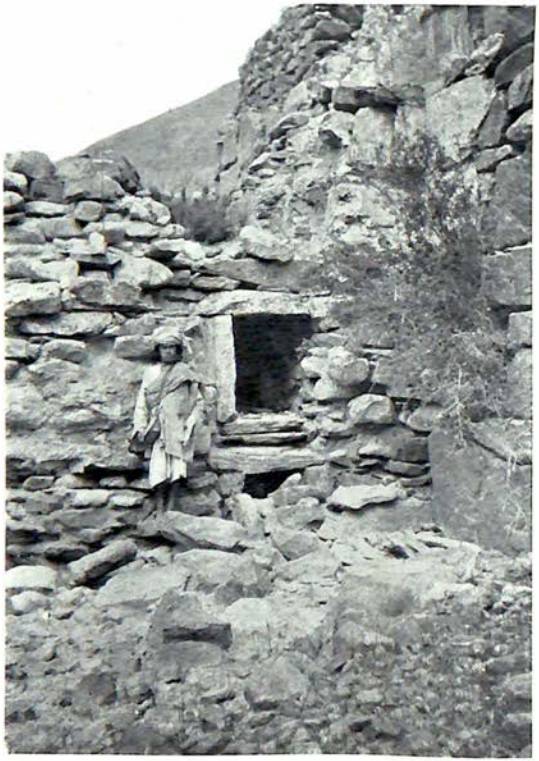
and a third has been built into the wall, perhaps because it was rejected as imperfect when the sluice was made.

High up on the buttress wall, facing the river, there is an oblong slab of slate-coloured stone, the middle part sunk, leaving a sharply cut raised edge, two inches wide, which looks as if it had been a memorial tablet, but there is no trace of lettering on it, and the edges are so perfect that it does not look as if it had been defaced. Can it have had a stone or metal plate let in, bearing an inscription, or covering one, as in the case of the old mosque at Shigar?

The Rajah, Shah Abbas of Skardo, told Aziz Khan, when he was here some years before, that many centuries ago there was a village beside the Buddha rock which was destroyed by a flood caused by the rising of the Sadpor river, and that the last Buddhist Rajah of Skardo built the barrage and sluice-gates to prevent such occurrences. The river is the principal water supply for the town. This Rajah was killed in the killa at Skardo by Mongolian invaders, according to local tradition.

A few yards above the barrage there is a roughly made dam of unhewn stones broken away in the middle (shown in the photograph, p. 304), which was built by Ahmad Shah, the last independent Rajah of Skardo, who was taken prisoner by the Dogras, and after many adventures died near Lhasa.

I have not discovered any account of these ancient and interesting monuments, the barrage and the Buddha rock, in the books describing this part of the country. Even Dr. Thomson, who spent a whole winter in Skardo, and got to know all the roads in the neighbourhood while geologising, makes no allusion to them in his *Travels*



By the Author

DOOR AT BARRAGE, WHICH FORMERLY HAD FIGURES OF BUDDHA ON THE FRAME.

To face page 306.

By the Author

STONE FOR INSCRIPTION ON PIER OF SLUICE-GATES.

which he would surely have done if he had seen them.

The Private Secretary to the Maharajah of Kashmir, who has been the prime mover in having an archæological department formed in connection with the State, had not heard of their existence till I told him of them in December, 1904.

The age of the Sadpor barrage is uncertain, as it is not known at what date the Baltis were converted to Mohammedanism. General Cunningham conjectures that probably the bigoted King of Kashmir, Sikander Butshikan (the idol-breaker), who died A.D. 1410, sent armed bands into the country to propagate the Mohammedan religion. Several of the Balti rajahs trace their ancestry to about that period, and are perhaps descendants of victorious generals who deposed or killed the rulers of petty states, and established themselves in their stead. It may have been that the Buddhist builder of the barrage met his death very early in the 15th century at the hands of one of these Kashmir invaders. It is all the more to be regretted that there are no remains of an inscription on the pier of the sluice-gates, as it would probably have cast some much-needed light on the history of Baltistan.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE TEHSILDAR OF SKARDO.

On my way back from the lake I stopped at the Buddha rock to copy the inscription on it, sending Aziz Khan on to the camp, and when I got in an hour or two afterwards I found him stammering with rage and excitement, and Miss Christie very indignant; they could get no supplies, though two messages had been sent to the Tehsildar, and only one sheep had been brought, for which its owner asked four rupees. "Look this, Miss Sahib," said Aziz Khan, seizing the struggling animal by its feet and holding it up, "only fifteen pounds, and they say four rupees!" Preposterous! The proper price was one rupee, eight annas, or two rupees, but a somewhat rude letter sent to Miss Christie in reply to one of her messages to the Tehsildar said she was to pay four rupees, or six, or whatever was asked, although there is always a fixed scale of charges which should be shown to travellers on demand by the lumbardar. It is necessary to lay in supplies for the four days' journey from Skardo to Burzil Chowki on the Gilgit Road, across the Deosai Plains, a desolate plateau with an average height of 13,000 feet, inhabited only by marmots, and subject to blizzards even in August, with not a roof of any description on it, the only erections being what look like very small sheepfolds with walls three feet high, where shelter can be obtained by

crouching behind them. It is only sahibs who use tents on the Deosai plains, and native travellers, ponymen, and coolies spend the night in these shelters, where two or three stones form the fire-place. Everything but water has to be carried, neither wood nor food of any description being obtainable. The situation was so serious that Aziz Khan asked me to telegraph at once to the Commissioner at Leh, and to write to the Tehsildar telling him I was doing so, and as we could not be worse, I thought I would try if bullying would do any good, so I wrote as follows:

"To the Tehsildar of Skardo.

"On my return from Sadpor at seven o'clock this evening, I was told that you had refused to give supplies to me and Miss Christie, and I have telegraphed to the Commissioner at Leh reporting you. You will be heavily fined and dismissed. In the meantime give orders to the lumbardar that my servant is to have everything he requires—wood, sheep, chickens, milk, and eggs."

It was an outrageous piece of bluff to threaten fine and dismissal, but this kind of bluff terrifies the native, who cannot bear to part with his money. Aziz Khan was despatched with note and telegram, and about an hour later, just after I had got into bed, I heard a good deal of talking outside my tent, and was told next morning that it was the Tehsildar's munshi who had come to say that I should have everything, everything I wanted, but would I not send that telegram! As the telegraph office was closed when Aziz Khan got to it, he promised, but next morning Miss Christie, who saw him after I had left on another visit to Sadpor, told him he must send it, for she could not do with a man who said one thing one day and another thing the next. It went, but she had to start on her journey that day without anything but a few chickens, and

an assurance that she would find a supply of wood awaiting her at the next village, which she did; but it was wet, and had to be thrown away very soon.

I went off early on my second visit to Sadpor, and when I came back at noon everything had been procured. In the afternoon the Tehsildar, a Hindu, but of a very different type from the kindly and well-bred Wazir Wazarat, was announced, come to say salaam to the Miss Sahib. My arm-chair was placed at one side of the table, and the small one that is always in danger of collapsing on the other side for the Tehsildar, the postmaster, not in his night clothes this time, standing at one end as his interpreter, and Aziz Khan at the other end as mine; his tail of men and my servants, about a dozen people in all, stood round. He was dressed in a European suit of tweed, with riding breeches, a double watch-chain festooned across his chest, and a neatly rolled white pagri on his head, and looked quite imposing until unfortunately he marred the effect by some primitive habits which were in laughable contrast with his pretentious air.

After salaams we seated ourselves, and I proceeded to take him to task for his misdemeanours. How my people at home would have laughed if they could have seen me alone in the centre of Asia sitting in judgment on the district magistrate! I began by saying I could not understand why he had refused supplies the day before, to which he replied that he had given the lumbardar orders to send me everything. "Yes," I said, "but it was under a threat. It was not until I had told you I was telegraphing to the Commissioner Sahib." He said he had told the lumbardar before, but he had not obeyed his orders. On my asking which was the lumbardar he was pointed out, a tall, gloomy-looking man, with his arms folded in his white draperies.

"And does this ignorant man imagine," I exclaimed, waving an indignant hand towards him, "that two English mem sahibs are to be treated in this way? I'll report you to the Wazir Wazarat!" "Why would you do that?" asked the postmaster. "The Wazir Wazarat would only report him to the Tehsildar, and he is going to fine him five rupees. And is the Miss Sahib satisfied? Has she got everything?" "Yes, *I* have got everything, but why had Miss Christie to go without anything this morning on such a journey as that across the Deosai Plains?" A great clamour arose, half a dozen men speaking at once. "And why was there no chowkidar here when I arrived? At all other places from Leh down to the smallest village the lumbardar or chowkidar always received me and sent supplies at once, while here I had to wait for four hours before anyone came." "The Government does not supply a chowkidar here, and of course the Tehsildar can't pay for one out of his own pocket." "And what about that letter that was sent telling Miss Christie she was to pay anything she was asked? She is going to show it to the Resident Sahib." The Tehsildar denied having written it, and the postmaster said the signature would show who had done so. "Who dares to write in such a way from your house in your name? I hold you responsible for the conduct of your servants, and the lumbardar ought to be dismissed at once." The Tehsildar smiled superciliously at this, and I was asked once more if I had got everything I wanted, and if I would write at once to the Commissioner Sahib telling him that I had, and that the lumbardar would be fined—and the postmaster in his eagerness put pen and ink before me. "I'll write presently," I said, and then seeing that he looked doubtful I added, "Indeed, I must write this evening to the Commissioner Sahib to explain,

after having telegraphed to him." Consternation! "You telegraphed to him? When?" "This morning." The Tehsildar, looking straight before him, gave an order in a low voice, and Aziz Khan stooped and said softly, "That is the lumbardar being taken to prison." I looked round and there he was being marched off on the spot. The Tehsildar then said that in future there should always be a chowkidar in readiness (I was told two minutes before that this was impossible), who would see that all sahibs got supplies—"And mem sahibs," I interposed—"and mem sahibs got the supplies they wanted; and did not the Miss Sahib want to bring a complaint against the lumbardar at Gol who refused to give her and the other Miss Sahib ponies?" I had forgotten all about this, but said "Yes, I did," and was asked to write a formal complaint to the Tehsildar, who would have the man brought to Skardo to be dealt with. These rather ludicrous tokens of terror were received on my part with inward mirth, but outwardly with dignified condescension, as being in some measure a reparation for the annoyance and inconvenience the Miss Sahibs had suffered. There is always an air of comic opera about natives in their sudden changes from insolence to abjectness, when they find they are getting the worst of it. Next morning when I was on the point of starting the Tehsildar appeared once more to say salaam before I left; his politeness seemed overpowering, but was explained after he had gone by Aziz Khan asking me to write out a telegram to the Commissioner saying the lumbardar had been fined and imprisoned. The Tehsildar had given him a rupee to pay for it; it would take a week for my letter to go to Leh, and he was afraid he might be fined in the meantime. My piece of bluff had answered beautifully, and the best of the joke was that Captain Patterson

wired to me that he had nothing to do with Skardo and had reported the matter to the Wazir Wazarat. But a native who *has* jurisdiction is nowhere at all compared with a British Commissioner who has none.

A week or two afterwards a telegram was handed to me from the Wazir Wazarat, the duplicate of one he had sent to the Tehsildar, asking for an explanation of his conduct and directing him to show the Miss Sahibs the price list and give them all the supplies they required.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

PASSES AND PLAINS.

WHEN I got up on the morning of the 19th of September, the weather looked so unsettled that it did not seem quite prudent to go by the Deosai Plains, though I was told that two hundred men were going from Skardo that day, and that they would be a protection to my party, which perhaps meant that if we were caught in a snow-storm we had a chance of rescue, but as it happened we never saw them. After deciding to go by the Indus valley and Kargil (which involved retracing my steps almost the whole way to Srinagar), the sky had cleared so much by the time for starting that it seemed a pity to take that long roundabout road, so I changed my mind once more and gave the order for the route by the Plains, to the evident amusement of the ponymen, who, however, were well pleased to take the shorter journey. They were Kashmiris who had brought goods to Skardo, and I engaged them to take us to Bandipura on the Wular Lake, in the Vale of Kashmir, where the Gilgit Road begins.

After passing over some miles of stony plain in the outskirts of Skardo and up a narrow gorge the scenery changed, the valley widened, and as we ascended vegetation appeared in patches on the mountain sides. We camped

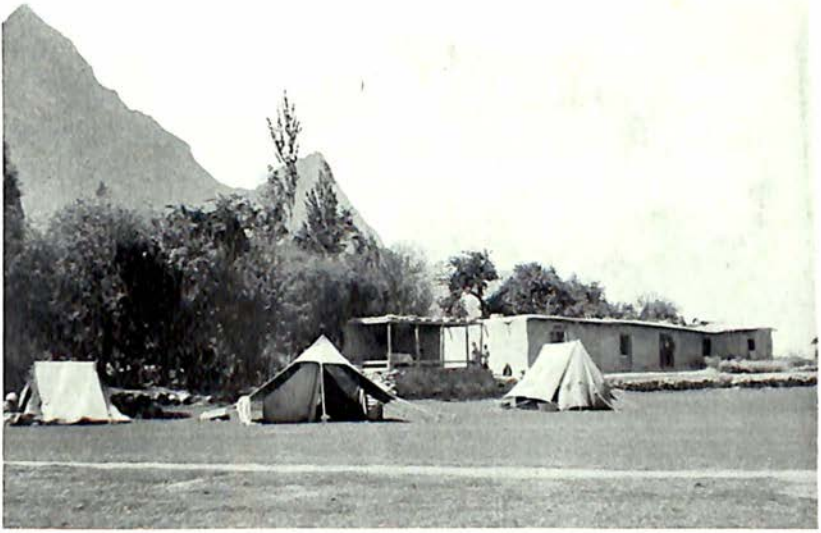
at Pindobal, 11,400 feet, in a sheltered nook near the foot of the Burji La, and as I walked about to keep myself warm voices were echoing far down the nullah opening into the Indus valley, which we had left behind us for the last time. Up above there was a vision in the sky of a calm silver sea, rocky islands rising out of it with bays and headlands, a stretch of white sandy beach curving along the foot of the hills, round whose heads filmy vapours floated, and in front a range of peaks powdered with snow. Slowly the scene melted away. Were those real mountains climbing towards the heavens?

Soon after three o'clock the sun had disappeared behind the hill immediately above the camp, but was still shining on the upper part of the valley, enhancing the glorious colours—rich yellow, delicate green, varied with splashes of crimson—of the trees which climbed far up among the rocks. Lower down were clumps of yew, wild rose, and barberry, gay with plum-coloured and scarlet fruit; the ground was covered with grass, and the keen mountain air brought the sound of the rush of distant waters. There is no irrigation here, the vegetation is all natural. How different from the hot stony tracks I had been passing through, which nevertheless have a beauty of their own! A clematis trailed itself up the yew trees, waving grey heads like dandelion "clocks," and a dwarf shrub with a scaly stem grew in profusion, looking like withered bracken. In this nullah and in the Hanu nullah, and also in approaching the Chang La, it is very noticeable how vegetation increases as the ground rises, owing to the mists which hang about the mountains giving some slight moisture to the soil.

Trains of pack-ponies passed the camp on their way

from Kashmir down to Skardo. Their drivers gave a favourable report of the road, and we started in good spirits next morning at 7.45, and got to the snow at 10.45. Clouds began to roll up and soon obscured the sky, parting now and then to let a gleam of sunshine come through or a range of peaks show itself, but the Mustagh range on the other side of the Indus was completely hidden. There were some showers of hail, and when we got to the snow the wind blew it in little powdery clouds along the surface, which was firm enough to ride over, and only extended for half a mile. The snow-field stopped short just at the foot of the knife-like ridge at the summit, and as I wished to walk up the few remaining yards to the top I dismounted, but had only taken half a dozen steps when I sank down completely spent, and could not get into the saddle again till I had drunk some brandy from the flask which Aziz Khan had thoughtfully put in the saddle-bag. He afterwards gave me the cheerful information that one winter he had come upon five men lying dead at that very spot who had been overcome by the cold. I did not feel it at all severely cold, but was very heavily clad, and the exertion of walking up-hill in the wind at an elevation of 15,900 feet tries the heart, already strained by the rarity of the air. At the summit I turned to take a last look, and through the mists caught a glimpse of Shigar, 8000 feet below. In clear weather there is a magnificent view of the Mustagh mountains forty or fifty miles off, which rise to a height of from 20,000 to 25,700 feet.

The descent from the Burji La to the Deosai Plains is only 500 feet down a steep slope of gravel and sand, and the further descent of 2000 feet to the camping ground at Ali Malik Mar is so gradual that one is hardly



CAMP AT SHIGAR.

By Miss Christie.

DEOSAI PLAINS.

Photographed by Miss Christie.

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conscious of it. The plateau is surrounded by low uninteresting-looking hills, only some 17,000 or 18,000 feet high, dimensions which sound quite respectable, just a little higher than Mont Blanc, but that "bald awful sovran" himself would not show to much advantage in a situation like this with the plain reaching up to his shoulders. There was no snow on the low ground except a few patches in sheltered corners, and the sun shone fitfully, making us feel as if we had got into a mild climate; I sat down under the lee of a rock which kept my back warm, and had tiffin, beginning with soup and ending with boiling hot coffee, and afterwards fell into a comfortable half dose with a small shower of hailstones pattering on my helmet. After that the weather improved and the night was fine, the moon shining as bright as day and the air perfectly still—a great blessing here where the wind is bitter when it does sweep along, and there is no shelter from it. It was quite a surprise in the morning to find that a tumblerful of water standing on the table beside me was a solid mass of ice, for the tent was very comfortable. There had been a slight fall of snow, and the ground was white as I sat outside taking breakfast, but the sun soon made it disappear.

This day's ride was very pleasant, over grass for the most part, and across several rivers easily forded in their autumn shallowness: one of them is called Kala Pani (black water), and runs through peaty-looking soil. Here I could have believed myself to be on a wide Scottish moor with storm-clouds sweeping across the hills before the fresh, bracing wind; there were breadths of a plant looking like burnt heather at a little distance to add to the resemblance. The upper part of the plain which we had crossed the day before was now white with snow, and it was

evident there was a storm raging behind us and that we had only just crossed the Burji La in time to escape it. We camped in a slight hollow at Sekbachan, 18 miles from Malik Mar, the night as still as the previous one and the temperature the same; it seemed as if the Deosai Plains were not going to be so formidable as they had been described; but the third day a storm of hail, sleet, and snow alternately came on at noon when we began to ascend the Sari Sangar Pass, 14,200 feet (which terminates the plains in this direction), and continued with only a few minutes' intermission till four o'clock. The top of the pass is a fairly level valley containing two lakes, their shores formed of boulders which it looked impossible to ride over. The men slid and stumbled so much that I would not let anyone lead my pony for fear of pulling him over; he was old and slow and far from distinguishing himself on easy ground, but was perfectly splendid here, and picked his way among the rocks without a falter. At the summit there is a cairn on which each man threw a stone, and here it is customary to give backshish to the coolies. After this there is a very steep but well-made path winding down to a river which has to be forded, then more boulders, then a grassy valley rising so gradually to the Stakpi La, 12,800 feet, that it is difficult to recognise the pass till it is crossed, when one begins to go rather sharply down hill among stones and water. The storm, which had made the latter part of the ride very uncomfortable and fatiguing, now ceased, and the road led among birch-trees in their golden autumn foliage down to the Rest-house at Burzil Chowki, which was reached at 4.30. And it *was* a house of rest! I had walked the last two miles, or rather limped, for one knee was so stiff with cold and having to cling tightly to the saddle that I could hardly use it, and the comfort of getting

within stone walls, perfectly bare as the room was, and having some hot tea beside a glowing fire was intense. Damp clothes were hung to dry on all the chairs. I lay down and had an hour's sleep before dinner and another of ten hours after it, and next morning after a hot bath (which I had had to do without while crossing the plains) felt quite brisk and ready for the road. The chowkidar here was the most ludicrously dirty man I have ever seen —a chimney-sweep would not have been in it with him, for with the chimney-sweep one feels that the black is accidental, but this creature looked as if neither he nor his clothes had ever been washed since their creation. He was very tall and slender, with small head and face and very small jaws—a refined type and utterly unlike either the Baltis or Ladakhis. He was a Dard, and as Herodotus remarks that in his time they never washed but smoked themselves instead, the dirt was very anciently hereditary. One of my ponymen, also a Dard, might have been own brother to the chowkidar, sootiness and all.

The Skardo Tehsildar had sent the chowkidar an order to let me have everything I wanted, including goods from the Government store in connection with the Rest-house. I was much surprised by the attention, and remarked on it to Aziz Khan, who explained as follows: "I said to Tehsildar, 'You big man, you not come say salaam to Miss Sahib!' He say he too busy in his office writing, writing all day. I say 'Governor of Kashmir come five times say salaam to Miss Sahib; Wazir Wazarat come every day; Maharajah give Miss Sahib pony. You big man, you not come say salaam.'" And the conscience-stricken Tehsildar was trying to atone for past neglect and to behave like a big man too. Aziz Khan may not always stick to what has been called the bald literality of fact, but he is a grand

trumpeter, and does not fail to add a few flourishes of his own to the original tune.

An Englishman I met in Srinagar some months after this remarked what an extremely civil man the Tehsildar of Skardo was, sending him immediately on his arrival a dali of fruit, and offering to come himself and guide him through the town; this was odd, because Major Wigram had had the lumbardar, who takes his cue from the Tehsildar, fined for inattention to a visitor a few weeks before I was there. That telegram I sent to the Commissioner would ensure good behaviour among the officials for some time. Aziz Khan remembered the Tehsildar getting a tremendous drubbing from a sahib ten years before, but a drubbing to these people is like vaccination, the effect wears off after a while and it has to be renewed.

Miss Christie had arrived at the bungalow at Burzil Chowki the previous evening quite exhausted; her marches had not been well divided, so that she did not get in till nine, and the last two or three hours down a very rough descent after nightfall when a stream had to be forded repeatedly would have been very dangerous had it not fortunately happened to be moonlight. The weather had been giving signs of breaking for some days before we left Skardo, and she was anxious to cross the Deosai Plains (which are supposed to be closed after the 15th of September) before it became really bad, but after all she had it a good deal worse than I had. On my first visit to Sadpor the Buddha Rock was already in shadow at ten o'clock in the morning, and it was necessary to be at it before eight to photograph it; this I felt I must not omit to do, even if the delay of a day obliged me to retrace my steps up the Indus and take the long round back by Kargil and the Zoji La to Kashmir. I was spared this

disappointment, however. In spite of fatigue, Miss Christie had only stayed one night at Burzil Chowki, and we did not meet till I got to Bandipura.

At Burzil Chowki we got on to the Gilgit Road, a road fraught with tragic memories of death and suffering in the making of it. Coolies were formerly impressed to work on it, and so great was the dread of the dangers and privations involved that many of them paid heavy bribes to escape. Forced labour has been abolished, thanks to our Government, and when the Maharajah now gives an order for so many thousand coolies to be put on any piece of work, they are paid the ordinary wages of labourers.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DOWN THE GILGIT ROAD TO THE VALE OF KASHMIR.

We had now entered the Dard country where the ant-gold was found which is mentioned by several ancient writers, Herodotus among them, who has been laughed at for centuries for writing about ants "smaller than dogs but larger than foxes"; a very good description of marmots, which to this day throw out sand from their burrows with particles of gold mixed in it. Aziz Khan told me he had seen this himself at Chillum Chowki (one march from Burzil Chowki on the way to Gilgit); this place is on the banks of a stream which flows into the Indus. He said that the natives collect the gold, make it into ingots, and sell it in the bazaar at Gilgit, where he has bought it. Many things at the present time are called by names given to them long ago on account of their origin, real or supposed, which do not now correctly describe them, and it may be the same in this case, or perhaps the translators of Herodotus have got the wrong name for the animals, for he says, "These ants then make their dwelling under ground, and carry up the sand just in the same manner as the ants found in the land of the Hellenes, *which they themselves also very much resemble in form*" (Book iii. 102). Greek ants not having any resemblance to foxes he must have meant

something else.[1] Like many other stories of his which were long considered ridiculous, such as that of birds picking leeches out of the jaws of alligators, now an established fact, his account of how the so-called ant-gold was obtained turns out to be quite correct. An extract from General Cunningham's *Ladak* (pp. 232-234) shows that recent research reveals more and more the trustworthiness of his statements. "The sands of the Indus have long been celebrated for the production of gold (Pliny, Lib. vi. c. 19 '*Fertilissimi sunt auri Dardae*'), and this is the case even to the present day, for the sands of the Indus in the Dard country are said to be more prolific than those of any other part of the river. But the gold of the Indus was known at a still earlier date, for Megasthenes relates that the Indian ants dug gold out of the earth, not for the sake of the metal, but in making burrows for themselves (Arrian, *Indica*, xv.). These Indian ants are no doubt the marmots (*Arctomys*), and rat-hares (*Lagomys*) of Tibet, which in making burrows 'throw up the earth wherein the ore is contained, from

[1] An accomplished Greek scholar gave me the following as a possible explanation of this passage: "I do not think he had in mind any idea of the insect ant when he was writing the passage, but used a word employed in his day—infrequently perhaps in that sense—to indicate a class of burrowing animals which had a representative in the European fauna." With reference to the passage (Book iii. 105) in which Herodotus describes the ants as being "superior to any other creature in swiftness, so that unless the Indians" (who, he was told, gather the sand containing the gold in bags, and then ride off on very swift camels) "got a start in their course, while the ants were gathering together, not one of them would escape," my correspondent remarks: "The story seems to have been embellished by those who told it to Herodotus, by attributing to the burrowing animals a ferocity and swiftness which they do not possess." Marmots are in fact very timid creatures, disappearing into their holes on the approach of human beings. I got within a few yards of one once on the Chorbat La, which was of a tawny colour, and looked like a very large cat, much larger and lighter in colour than those commonly seen.

which the Indians extract gold' (*Journal Roy. As. Soc.* vii. p. 143). On the plains along the banks of the Indus and Shayok the marmots still throw up the earth mixed with gold-dust, from which the Indians of Balti occasionally extract a few grains of gold. Megasthenes confesses that he had not seen the animals themselves, but only their skins, which had been brought by the Macedonian soldiers into Alexander's camp. The skin of the marmot is the commonest of all the furs now brought to India. Its Tibetan name is phyi-pa or chipa (or chupa), which was probably confounded by Alexander's soldiers with the Indian chūntā, the name of the large ant; or phyi-pa may have been confounded with pippilaka, the Sanscrit and Bengali name of the large ant.

"The same story of the ants as big as foxes is told by Herodotus,[1] and Professor H. H. Wilson (*Journal Roy. As. Soc.* vii. p. 143) has aptly illustrated it by a passage from the Mahābhārata, which relates that 'the people who dwell under the pleasant shade of the Kichaka-venus (a kind of willow), and along the Sailveta river, between the Meru and Mandura mountains, . . . brought to Yndisthira lumps of gold, a *drona* (64 lbs.) in weight, of the sort called paippilika, 'or ant gold,' which was so called because it was exfodiated by the *pippilaka*, or common large ant.' This belief, however erroneous, as the learned Professor observes, was neither extravagant nor irrational. A yet earlier mention of the gold of Alpine India is that of Ctesias, but he distinctly states that it was not obtained by washing as in the river Pactolus (Fragments of Ctesias by Lion. *Indica*, xii.)."

The love of the marvellous of Herodotus has long been a subject of jesting, but the title of "Father of Lies" has

[1] Book iii. 102.

really been given to him through the sheer ignorance of moderns unaware of the natural history of the countries which he describes from accounts supplied to him by natives, or by travellers who had visited those countries. Amidst inaccuracies or misunderstandings, quite comprehensible when we consider how often our own ideas are confused when we have to trust to the descriptions of others for facts, there is generally a substratum of truth even in the most marvellous of his stories. For example, he says that in India trees which grow wild produce wool surpassing in beauty and excellence that of the sheep, and that the Indians wear clothing obtained from these trees. This of course means cotton.

Again, he says that a camel has two thigh-bones and two knee-joints in each hind-leg, but anyone who has ridden that beast will admit that when it kneels or rises his sensations would seem to account for that number, for the four sickening lurches that accompany these movements are caused by the creature bending two joints in each leg, the front ones and hind ones successively. Herodotus reports that in his time some of the Scythians lived on the fruit of the Pontic tree, the fruit being the size of a bean with a stone in it, and that they made cakes of the pulp of it, which is what the Ladakhis and Baltis do to this day with the apricot. He also reports that certain of the tribes used the skulls, of parents in some cases, of enemies in others, as drinking cups, gilding them or covering them with leather according to their means, and it is perhaps a survival of this ancient custom which exists still in the use of silver skull-shaped cups by the Lamas, and of drums made of criminals' skulls, which they rattle during their festivals. The references made by the old historian to the aspect of the mountainous

parts of Scythia, its stony deserts, its want of trees, its gold-bearing sands, and to the snow "like wool" falling so thickly as to blot out the landscape, all show that the information given to him was in the main that of eye-witnesses which he faithfully records. Where he has no such evidence he frequently guards himself in his statements, as when he says that he does not "accept the tale that there is a river flowing into the sea towards the North Wind whence it is said that amber comes; nor do I know of the existence of 'Tin islands' from which tin comes to us. . . . I am not able to hear from anyone who has been an eye-witness, though I took pains to discover this, that there is a sea on the other side of Europe. However that may be, tin and amber certainly come to us from the extremity of Europe."[1] How laughable his scepticism seems to us when he writes thus of the rivers of the Baltic, of the Atlantic Ocean, and of our own beloved land, now bulking so large in the eyes of the world, and yet this very caution makes his history worthy of more trust than it has sometimes received on points where our own information is still incomplete. Now that I have seen not only the Dards, who smoke themselves instead of washing, and the marmots which produce ant-gold, but also a piece of sculpture at Gwalior in Central India of a hippopotamus with a mane which he said it possessed, and which shows that he was not singular in his belief, I wish to add my humble testimony to the truthfulness, as far as my own observation goes, of him who bears the venerable name of "Father of History," and to the general correctness of his records of strange facts in countries unknown to him except through the medium of "travellers' tales," which in these days of widespread

[1] Book iii. 115.

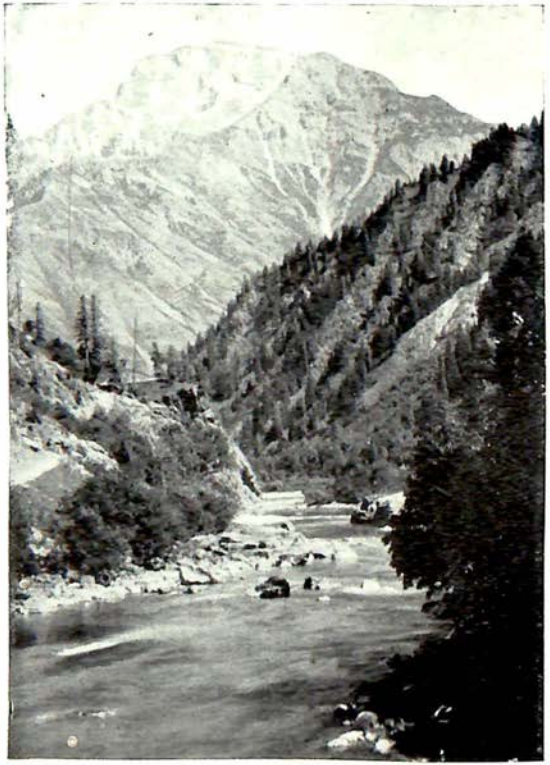
information are not received, however wonderful, with the scorn which used to be heaped on them in the darkness of former centuries.

The Gilgit Road, which was made for military purposes, Gilgit being one of the most important fortified posts on the boundary between Kashmir and Russia, is ten feet wide, and so smooth and well-made and with so easy a gradient that a light cart could be driven along the whole portion of it which I travelled over, 66 miles, from Burzil Chowki to Bandipura. A Canadian horse would simply dash along it with a *calèche*, the two-wheeled springless chaise hung on leather straps which is used in the Province of Quebec. After the paraos and beds of streams and goat-tracks of Ladakh and Baltistan this road seemed monotonously, even tiresomely good, there not being a single bad place in it to give excitement and variety, but it certainly left plenty of opportunity for looking at the scenery instead of watching the pony's steps. What a lovely morning it was on that 23rd of September, and what a lovely scene when we left the bungalow, which, in the winter, is completely covered with snow. The sky was of the deepest blue, the hills with a fresh powdering of snow had a scarf of white fleecy mist along their shoulders, and little puffs of it were drawn up by the warmth of the sun in delicate feathers to crown their crests; the silver-stemmed birches, with leaves like patens of gold, stood in groups by themselves or mingled with the dark green pines that clothed the mountains, melting drops fell sparkling from the shrubs, and a burn rushed down to join the Burzil River in the glen below. The air, crystal clear, was like champagne, and the contrast with the storm and gloom of the previous day made it seem

like another world. The gorge is narrow, and one side is almost entirely bare while the other is clothed with dense forest to the very top, a peculiarity in some of these glens. Mountains, pines, birches, bracken, and grassy slopes recall Scotland at its finest, and nothing can excel best Scotch, as everybody knows. A few miles down we passed Minimarg, a grassy meadow much below the level of the road, where there are a few huts and a telegraph station, the highest in Indian territory, 9700 feet; on this fine morning it looked very pretty with sheep and goats feeding and stacks of grass dotted over it, a kite whistling cheerily as it floated along, but it is fearfully lonely when the passes are closed.

The march that day was only 11 miles to Pechwara bungalow, which we reached at two o'clock—a relief, as the fatigue of the previous day began to make itself felt again. From Pechwara to Gurez, the next stage, fourteen miles, the scenery was the same as before, till the valley opened out about two miles above Gurez bungalow, leaving space for farms and brown log-built farmhouses. Harvesting operations were going on in the fields of barley, trumbah, and hay, while patches of deep crimson ganza, a plant like "red-hot poker," gave brilliance to the scene. The head of the valley is blocked by a mountain of limestone 14,000 feet high, on one side of which the Tilel stream comes down and the Burzil on the other; immediately below it, the two unite and form the Kishenganga, a river held very sacred by the Hindus.

It was so warm here that instead of occupying the bungalow I had my tent pitched in a field on the river-bank, whence there was a full view of the comings and goings on the road, which we had left by a suspension bridge made to bear "1 camel, 2 ponies or mules, 6 men,"



By Miss Christie.

THE KISHENGANGA AT GUREZ.

To face page 328.

By the Author.

KASHMIRI DARDS AT GUREZ.

as a notice-board announced, and soon after a caravan of camels passed down. I had dinner by moonlight, candles being superfluous, and the air was quite balmy. The next morning was spent in wandering about the village, which is quaint and unlike a Balti one in the way the houses are built. As wood is plentiful here they are made in logs like an American backwoodsman's hut, a notch being cut near the end of each log to allow the upper one to sink in, leaving but little space to fill up, which is done with clay and small pieces of wood. In the shelters for cattle, the spaces are left open. There is a flight of steps or a ladder up to the lower rooms, and as there are two stories the houses look large, but have no appearance of comfort or neatness. Their inhabitants, who are of mingled Dard and Kashmir descent, are dirty, ill-clad, and poor-looking. In the village, beside a stream there was a length of a large tree lying on the ground with a hollow cut in it to serve as the general wash-tub, and some women were tramping clothes in it just as they do blankets in a tub in Scotland. This is a Kashmiri custom, the pure Dards never washing either clothes or person.

The valley of Gurez is about ten miles long and from a mile to a mile and a half wide, and the hills rise almost perpendicularly from one side of the river to a height of from 2500 to 3000 feet above its level. On the other side they are not so steep. It is cultivated for the most part, and at the lower end the wooding is very fine; in fact, the ride through it and for some distance further down the Kishenganga yields some of the most charming views in Kashmir. At one end of the suspension bridge there is a hillock with what is called the Fort on it, a picturesque little building occupied by the naïb

tehsildar. There are some heaps of stones on each bank, said to be remains of killas, which perhaps guarded a wooden bridge at one time. Lower down there is a country bridge of timber and stones of the ordinary Kashmiri type.

After leaving Gurez and its trees and villages, the road became bare and solitary, and continued so all the way to Gorai, the next halting-place; but after that there were forests of birch and silver fir to near the beginning of the Rajdiangan Pass, 11,900 feet, the last pass to be crossed before entering the vale of Kashmir. There were many Gujars here, herdsmen who live in huts on the hills, their cattle being principally water buffalo, huge creatures with horns taking many different curves, and with a resemblance to hippopotami in their skins and unwieldiness. These animals are common in Ceylon and Burma, where they are very much given to attacking Europeans, but here they are quite harmless.

The Rajdiangan Pass, with its well-made road and smooth grassy summit, seemed very easy after past experiences, but it is very much exposed, and storms of wind and snow in the winter have caused much loss of life; three shelters, which have been put up within the last few years, have proved to be a great protection, both to telegraph working parties and to travellers and mule drivers. There are some white rocks near the summit where a large party of men and ponies were overcome by a storm in 1890, and they are buried there.

I reached the top of the pass at noon in brilliant weather; the valley of Kashmir was spread out like a map below, with range after range of snow-topped mountains closing it in, the wedge-shaped Haramukh, nearly 17,000 feet, towering aloft immediately opposite, and behind, a

hundred miles to the north, was the peak of Nanga Parbat, 26,690 feet, exceeded in height by only three mountains in the world—Mount Everest, Mount Godwin Austen (in Baltistan), and Kinchinjunga. The lower slopes of Haramukh were covered with a growth almost the colour of heather, from which sprang forests of pines and yellowing birches. After sitting for some time drinking in the beauties of the scene, the very easy, shady descent to Tragbal was begun and finished in less than two hours. Tragbal is a lovely place in the midst of forest scenery, with charming glades for camping in, and a truly pastoral air was given to it by the herds of Gujar cattle and hill ponies grazing and strolling near it.

The next day's march was a long zigzag down a bare hill-side exposed to the sun, to Bandipura at the head of the Wular Lake, and here Habibullah met me, all smiles, with a nice little Yarkandi piebald of Aziz Khan's, called Bulbul, and a good little syce aged twelve, who made the pony's coat shine like satin. Habibullah had quite recovered from his accident, and took the place of Ramzana, the incorrigible, who was now dismissed. Miss Christie had arrived the day before, and after meeting and comparing notes, we said good-bye once more, and went our separate ways through the side valleys of Kashmir, which, let me whisper, seemed very tame and uninteresting to both of us at first after the wilds of Tibet.

APPENDIX A.

THE INSCRIPTIONS AT BALU-MKHAR,

BY THE REV. A. H. FRANCKE.

No. I.

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION.

Phaggi lola dkrib mal bzhangsso.

CLASSICAL ORTHOGRAPHY.

Phaggi lola grib mal bzhangsso.

NOTE.

dkrib is an ancient perfect tense of the verb *agribpa*, to diminish, fade, become obscure. Here it is used in the sense of 'wither' or 'die.'

No. II.

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION.

Phagi lo briso ba.

CLASSICAL ORTHOGRAPHY.

Phaggi lo [*la*] *brisso* [*ba'i*].

No. III.

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION.

mthing brang γzhungslas khrungspai mdo γtsoň
rtso khri shong 'abum rdugs khung sras stag
γthsar rlabs cen nyidkyis bzo

bgyis dpel legs ta; yun
ta myi gyur γyung drung brtan
bai mkhar 'adila
la par stsogbao.

CLASSICAL ORTHOGRAPHY.

mthing brang γzhunglas khrungspai mdo thsong
γtso khri shong 'abum γdugs [kyi] khungs sras stag
thsar rlabscan nyidkyis bzo
bgyis dpe legste yun
te mi gyur γyungdrung [la] brten
pai mkhar 'adila
la[g] par stsogpao.

NOTES ON THE TIBETAN TEXT.

Mthing brang means 'house of the lapis lazuli.' It is probably the old name of the village, *mThingmo-gang*(=full of lapis lazuli). The village may have taken its name from an ancient treasure-house of the local chief. Mdo, Lower Valley, so called because the Indus valley is below the village of *γYung-drung* (generally called Lamayuru), to which the fort belonged.

γtsong; although in the present dictionaries only the word *thsong* can be found, such dialectical words, as for instance *shabtsongpa*, show plainly that a verb, *btsongpa* (perfect tense), must once have existed; *γtsong* would be the present tense of the same verb, meaning 'trading;' *rtso* would correspond to the present dialectical pronunciation of the word *γtso[bo]*. That in very ancient times *γ* or *b* prefixes were pronounced like *s* or *r* is proved by the Endere *sgraffiti* discovered by Dr. Stein. *mDo-γtsong-γtso* was the title of the custom-house officer stationed at Balu-mkhar.

Khri-shong-'abum-γdugs (pronounced *rdugs*) is the proper name of the custom-house officer. The last part of the name means '100,000 umbrellas' (the umbrella being a Buddhist symbol). The first part is not quite plain; it may have been given after the ancient king *Khri-srong-bde-btsan.*

khung-sras, instead of *khungs sras.* The *s* of the first

syllable was lost in the *s* of the second. It means 'lineage-son,' *i.e.* the son in whom the lineage is preserved.

stag-γthsar-rlabs-cen (*= can?*) is the name of the son of the last-named. It probably means 'the complete tiger, the ocean (having billows).' The word *γthsar* is the most remarkable in the name, because here a *tenuis aspirata* is furnished with a prefix, which combination is never met with nowadays. However, the Endere relics contain many examples of *tenues aspiratae* with prefixes. Besides the word *γthsar*, we find, in Inscription No. V. below, another case of a *tenuis aspirata* furnished with a *b·* prefix, in the word *bthsan*, which corresponds to the modern *btsan*. In the same way the word *γthsar* would correspond to *γtsar*, had such forms been preserved. Such a verb as *γtsar* I would take to be a parallel to *thsar*, just as we find *γtsong* and *btsong* parallel to *thsong* above.

dpel legs; the *l* of the second syllable was pronounced with the first syllable. It means 'good likeness,' and refers to the carving of the cenotaph, which was a good picture of the real *stûpa*.

ta; that the *ta* in the word *legsta* is instead of *te* is proved by the fact that it is followed by a *shad*. I presume that the *ta* in *yunta* also stands for *te*.

myi gyur, unchangeable, can also be translated with reference to the faithfulness of the inhabitants of the fort; it may also refer to Lamayuru (γYung-drung); *myi* instead of *mi* is another instance of very ancient orthography which has its parallels in the Endere inscriptions.

γYung drung, *svastika*, is the full name of the village of Yuru, generally called Lamayuru. The *ng* as a final is often dropped, especially in the Rong dialect, but also elsewhere. The disappearance of the *d* in *drung* is due to "Ladâkhî Laws of Sound, No. 2."

brtanba (*pa*) is the ancient form of the verb *brtenpa*, lean against, belong to; *par* is nowadays used for 'print'; but at the time of the inscription printing was hardly known in Tibet. At that time it may have meant 'writing, script.'

stsogbao (*pao*). The word *stsogces* or *rtsogces*, to carve on the rock, is a dialectical Ladâkhî word which is still in frequent use at the present day. It is also used for 'vaccination.'

No. IV.

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION.

dkon mchog.

No. V.

ROMAN TRANSLITERATION.

bthsan khro.

CLASSICAL ORTHOGRAPHY.

btsan khro.

POSTSCRIPT.

In a letter dated February 8th, 1906, Mr. Francke tells me that 'instead of "under (belongs to) Lamayuru," we may translate "adheres to the Bon religion," (*yuru* or *yungdrung* being an emblem of the Bon religion). Practically it comes to about the same, as popular tradition makes Lamayuru the foremost place of the Bon religion, and in those days the religion of the subjects was always in conformity with that of the masters.'

APPENDIX B.

TIBETAN SONGS RENDERED INTO ENGLISH VERSE, BY HAYWARD PORTER.

THE TIBETAN FIDDLE.

My fiddle, 'Royal Joy,'
  Deem not she has no sire.
The noble cedar, he:
  None else would she desire.

My fiddle, 'Royal Joy,'
  Is not without a mother.
The tendons of the goat
  Are she: why seek another?

My fiddle, 'Royal Joy,'
  Has brothers half a score.
My loving fingers they:
  Behold, she asks no more.

My fiddle, 'Royal Joy,'
  Is she of friends possessed?
The sounds herself gives forth
  Are of all friends the best.

THE POOR CHILD AND THE RICH CHILD.

Poor Child. Thou rich child of a wealthy man,
  Drink'st milk from china cup:
I, poor one, from a common can,
  'Tis buttermilk I sup.

Thou rich child of a wealthy man,
Thy silk gown trails around:
My poor skirt, by at least a span,
It fails to reach the ground.

Rich Child. Fresh water I sought
By the bank of the river:
Ice turned it to nought,
I staid but to shiver:
Fish froze on the brink;
The ducks could not drink.

Poor Child. Thou rich child of a wealthy man,
Hast a baby at thy breast:
I, poor one, fare as best I can
With a kitten to me pressed;
And in a churn you stir good tea,
That only water churns for me.

Rich Child. As the lamb they led
To the field, they said,
'Grow fat and take thy fling':
No thought had they
For the wolf that lay
Lurking, and ready to spring.

CHANT OF LADAKHI PILGRIMS.

OH, Thou Exalted One, grant that no evil come, save us, we pray.
Mayest thou think of it, morning and evening, show us our way.
And later on in life, whatever may betide, be Thou our stay.
Grant, Oh Exalted One, some good to us may come, from day to day.

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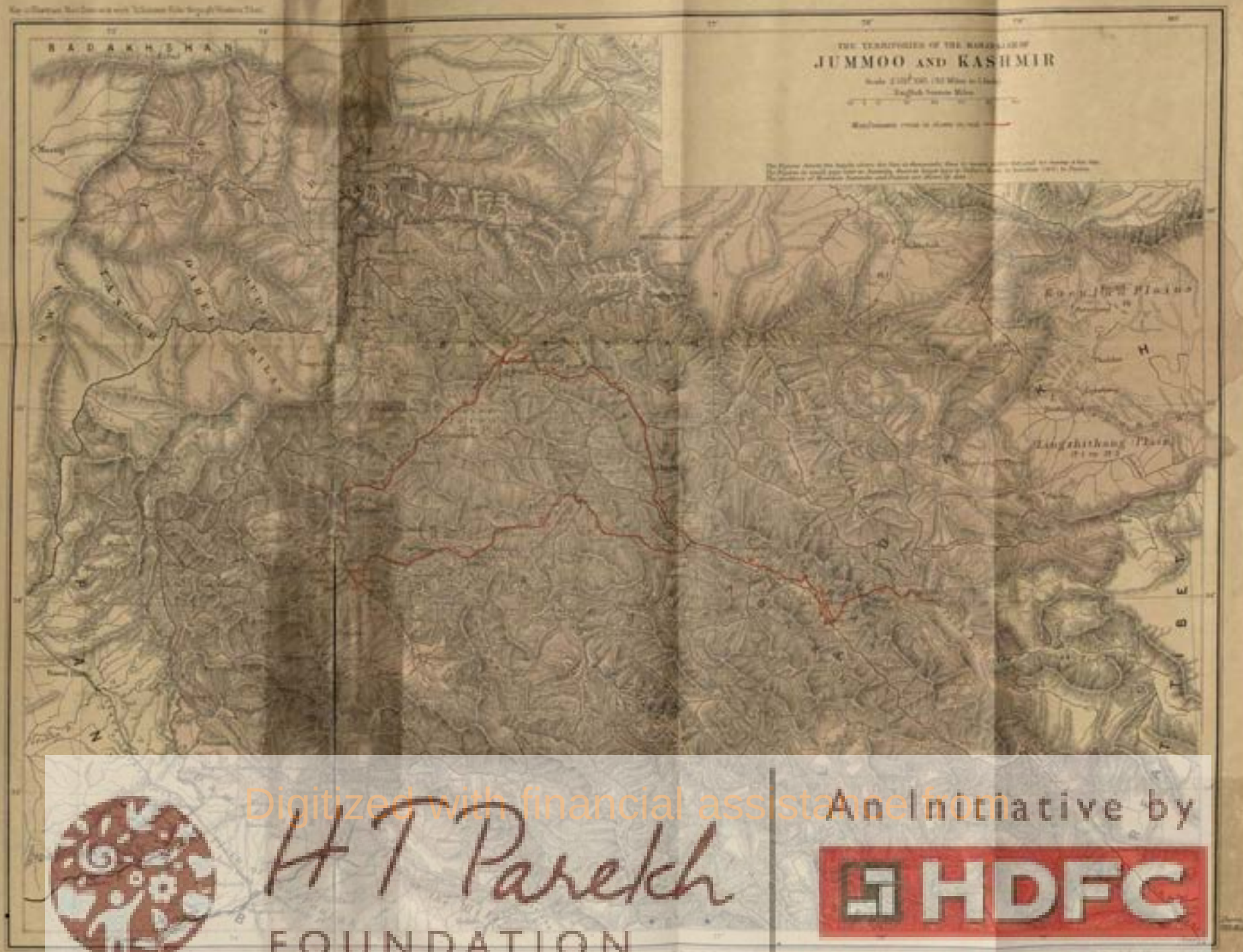

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